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He turned his head and saw a figure standing in the door of the Cone that caused him to start with surprise.

HAWKEYE HARRY, THE YOUNG TRAPPER RANGER.

BY OLL COOMES,
Author of "Frank Bell, the Boy Spy," "Shooting Star, the Boy Chief," etc.

CHAPTER VIII. THE PIPE OF PEACE.

LET us now return to the Cone—the home of the two trappers in the little cliff-girted valley, and look after Old Optic, whom we left closeted with an Indian, at the close of the preceding chapter.

Old Optic was one of those stern old trappers, of perhaps two score years, whom hardships and constant physical exertion had developed into bone and sinew. His rough, bearded face and dark gray eyes wore a pleasant expression, yet there had been times when the soul of the man was aroused, when those eyes grew fierce with rage, and that face rigid with deadly emotion.

The Indian that he had ushered into the Cone was young, and, as before stated, his weapons and barbaric finery bespoke the insignia of a chief.

"I am glad you have come, Red Wing," said the old trapper, "and I hope with good tidings and good feelings."

"Red Wing is chief of the remnant of the great Fox nation. He has watched for many suns the true course of events. He has seen the steady and certain advance of the white man into the hunting-grounds of his nation. The tomahawk and scalping-knife have failed to keep them back. When they oppose the white man, they fall before his deadly rifle. The Foxes are tired of fighting against the pale-face, for their warriors have fallen like the autumn leaves. We have decided to forever bury the hatchet, and smoke the pipe of peace with the pale-face. We will fight side by side with the white man against the Dakota, the Arapahoe, the Pottawatomie and the Sac. Red Wing has spoken."

"Your words have the right ring in them, Red Wing," replied Old Optic, "and as a representative of the whites, I will take upon my own head the responsibility of guaranteeing you their protection and friendship, if you do all you say you will."

The face of the chief lit up with a glow of joy. In this recognition of peace he imagined he could see the regeneration of his tribe, and their restoration to their former greatness and power.

Alas! deluded chief! Half a decade was to see the total extinction of his tribe!

"Then let the white warrior and Red Wing smoke the pipe of peace," said the chief, producing a highly-ornamented calumet filled with tobacco.

They smoked the pipe of peace and acknowledged each other friends. Peace between the Fox Indians and the whites was declared, and it was for this purpose that the chief had come to the Cone.

Presently the chief went to the door of the hut and uttered a shrill chirrup. Forth from behind the rocks and bushes, like phantoms, glided a hundred Indian warriors, painted for the war-path.

Old Optic experienced a slight shudder at sight of them, but he permitted no look to betray the least mistrust. His confidence in Red Wing had been so firmly settled by acts of kindness and words of truth, that he felt no hesitation in accepting him as a friend. But, in general, he knew it was the nature of an Indian to be treacherous, and in that band of a hundred he felt satisfied there were those unpossessed of the good traits of their chief.

Red Wing gathered his warriors around the Cone, and made known to them the treaty of peace that had just been consummated. Then followed the ceremony of burying the hatchet, and after this had been performed, most of the warriors left the valley, but shortly before night they returned, bearing with them, upon ponies, their women and children and a promiscuous mass of luggage—all their earthly possessions.

Before the sun had gone down, an Indian encampment had been pitched in the little valley, and the shouts of children and barking of dogs were echoing through the forest aisles.

Darkness came, but Hawkeye Harry did not. Old Optic felt somewhat uneasy about him.

Guards were posted in the defile leading into the valley, and along the bluff overlooking the camp.

The night wore away and a new day dawned, which was spent by the warriors in supplying the encampment with game for food, while Old Optic and the chief sat in consultation.

Night again threw its shadows over the forest and plain. Still Hawkeye Harry had not come.

Alone, by a small fire that burned in the center of the Cone, sat Old Optic gazing reflectively into its warm glow. He felt sorely uneasy about his young friend, Hawkeye Harry. On the morrow he resolved to make some search for him.

Then a soft footstep sounded behind him. He turned his head and saw a figure standing in the door of the Cone that caused him to start with surprise.

It was a human figure, enveloped in a large red blanket that swept the ground. The head was covered with a sort of fur hood, and the face concealed by a leathern mask, through the holes of which he could see a pair of eyes shining like balls of fire.

"Who in the thunder are ye, anyhow?" exclaimed the old trapper.

"One in quest of friendship and aid," replied the masked figure, whose voice was soft and feminine in its tones, yet a little husky.

"Have ye come far?" asked the trapper. "Over many a league, more or less."

"And how did ye get into the valley past the guards?"

"By extreme caution."

"Then your object in coming here must be of great importance, to run such risks?"

"It is, friend trapper; one in which my very life is involved, and to you have I come for aid."

"To me? What can I—a crazy old trapper—do?"

"Crazy!" repeated the masked stranger. "Your garments are coarse and rude, your speech rough and blunt; but was it always so? When you were lord of the Highlands on the banks of the Ohio river, were you not a gentleman of cultured refinement and polished manners?"

Old Optic started as though a dagger had been thrust into his bosom.

The masked stranger saw his emotion, and continued:

"I know you are surprised by what I have said; but, friend trapper, I say it with no intention of harrowing your feelings, nor opening an old wound. I know all about your past troubles, and why you are here as a trapper in the Far West, when you might have been one of the leading men in civilization. Do I not speak the truth?"

"You do, man or woman though you may be. Go on," said the trapper, grasping for further information as a drowning man grasps at a straw; "go on!"

"You were a kind and loving husband, a fond and affectionate father, but," and the stranger's voice grew tremulous, "what be-

came of your wife, and your sweet little girl?"

A groan came up from the trapper's heart.

"You would answer," continued the stranger, "that another won the affections of my wife, and together they fled from the Highlands to parts unknown, carrying my darling little Gertie with them. Broken-hearted, disgraced, I fled to the wilderness to forget my shame and sorrow amid its constant dangers."

"Yes, yes!" returned Old Optic, excitedly, "that is what my answer would have been."

"And have you never heard of that unfaithful wife since she left you?" asked the stranger.

"Never!" returned Optic, with the bitterness of despair.

"Nor your child—your little Gertie?"

"No."

"How old was she when you last saw her—the child?"

"She was in her ninth year."

"And how long since you last saw her?"

"Seven long, bitter years."

"Do you think you would know her if you were to see her now?"

The old trapper's face grew brighter. A ray of hope beamed in his eyes.

"Yes, I would know her. Her face could never have changed in seven years beyond a father's recognition, for it has ever been before me."

"And again: would you believe me were I to tell you where to find your daughter?"

Again Old Optic started, though a light of joy and hope shone in his eyes.

"You seem to know my past so well that I could not believe otherwise," he replied.

"She is the adopted daughter of the Sioux chief, Black Buffalo."

"Great Heaven! is this the truth, stranger?" gasped the old trapper.

"It is the solemn truth."

"Then to-morrow's day will find me on the way to the Sioux village. Gertie, my lost darling, shall be rescued, God willing!"

"Then I will go hence," said the masked stranger, turning toward the door of the Cone.

"Stay! stay, stranger!" cried the trapper. "Let me reward you for this service—this information! You said you had come for aid: name your desire, and if within my power, it shall be granted."

"My troubles are the same as yours. In the hands of the Sioux I have a captive child—a daughter—and I came to seek your aid to rescue her."

"Then stay, and together we will start in search of our children to-morrow. I will

obtain the assistance of Red Wing and his warriors, who are friends to the whites. We will march on the Sioux village, and if we can not effect the rescue of our children by ransom or stratagem, we can do it by force, for most of the Sioux are away on the war-path now."

"Then I will come back in the morning and accompany you," said the stranger.

"But why not remain now?" asked Old Optic.

"I can not."

"Then one question more: why are you here in disguise, and who are you?"

"I am a curious person, friend trapper, and shall insist, as a favor, on not being questioned in regard to my disguise, which I shall continue to wear during our journey to the Sioux village and until after my child has been rescued. I have good reasons for this secrecy, as you shall know some time, perhaps. As to my name, call me Clouded Heart. That will answer well—better than my real name. I'll come to-morrow morning; till then, adieu."

The masked stranger turned and glided from the Cone, leaving the old trapper alone with his thoughts.

Suddenly he was aroused by a footstep behind him.

He turned quickly, hoping to encounter the form of his beloved young companion, Hawkeye Harry.

But he was disappointed. It was Red Wing, the Fox chief.

"Ah, tis you, chief," he said. "I have had a strange visitor to-night. But, come, sit you down. I have a proposition to make to you—a proposition which is to be spiced with Sioux scalps, and many beautiful presents."

A grim smile flitted over the stoical features of the chief, as he seated himself before the old trapper.

CHAPTER IX.
A PERILOUS SITUATION.

HAWKEYE HARRY's emotions became terrible as he gazed down into the pale, upturned face of Nora Gardette, and saw the red tide of life flowing from the wound which his own hands had inflicted.

Her eyes were closed, the long, drooping lashes resting upon the pale cheeks. The lips stood slightly apart, revealing the white, pearly teeth; and the little hands lay limp and lifeless at her side. An expression of pain had settled upon the lovely face, whose contour was as delicately defined as though it had been chiseled from Parian marble.

The young ranger sat like one in a trance

—as motionless as the form that lay in his arm.

Slowly he regained his presence of mind; then he turned his attention to the maiden's wound. A cry of joy escaped his lips when he saw that which had he noticed it before, would have saved him a terrible pang of agony. The wound was not a deep one; the skull was not injured, the bullet having cut through the beautiful hair and plowed a furrow through the scalp behind. This Harry saw at a glance, and the low sigh and a slight motion of the body soon told him that his surmises were true.

"Thank God! she lives!" he cried. Then dipping some water in the palm of his hand, he began lavishing her brow.

The maiden stirred slightly, and, opening her eyes, gazed in bewilderment around, then closed them again.

The young man continued the application of water to the brow, and poured a few drops between her parted lips.

In a few minutes she opened her eyes again, and attempted to rise. But her head sunk back upon the throbbing breast of the young ranger.

"Rest easy, Miss Nora," he breathed in her ear; "you are safe, and, thank God, not much nor badly injured."

She started with a little sigh, and gazed around her as if trying to recall her situation. Then she raised her eyes, and gazing up into the face of her companion, demanded:

"Where am I?"

Hawkeye Harry told her. "Then you rescued me from the Indians," she said.

"Yes, and I came near taking your life. It was I that shot you—"

"You?" cried the maiden.

"Yes; I thought it was the Indian who was wrapped in the robe, and you in the red shawl."

A faint smile played about the lips of the maiden as she replied:

"The savage took a fancy to the red shawl, and, taking it from me, donned it himself and put his robe around me. But, oh, how my head pains me!"

"You have an ugly scratch upon it, Nora," he said, "that must be bound up; then we will try and get away from this spot."

Nora took from her pocket a linen handkerchief, which the youth carefully bound around her head, so as to staunch the flow of blood.

He then arose to his feet and was about to step ashore, when his ear suddenly caught the crash of hooved feet approaching through the woods from the south.

"I'm afraid we're in danger, Nora," he said, as he sprang ashore. "We will have to cross in the canoe to the opposite side of the river, and conceal ourselves in the woods."

Removing the bridle from his horse, he turned it loose. The trained beast had already detected the approaching danger, and sniffed the air. His master led him to the water's edge, and, by command, he plunged into the river, and swimming to the opposite shore, dashed away into the woods.

Re-entering the canoe, Hawkeye Harry took up the paddle and headed the craft toward the other bank.

A rod or two above the point where the horse had reached the opposite shore, a small bayou put into the river. It was as many as three rods wide, and quite deep. Along its edges grew a fringe of reeds and water-wilows, extending quite a rod out into the deepest water on either side, thus leaving a channel up the center that was unobstructed.

Hawkeye Harry saw at once what an admirable retreat the bayou offered, so up it he ran his canoe several rods, then turned at right-angles and pushed in toward the east shore.

Leaving over the prow of the canoe, he carefully parted the reeds and branches overhead, as he drew the little craft through the opening thus made, taking great care that not a single blade was broken, or left in an unnatural position.

After he had pulled his canoe well in among the reeds, he entered a small opening just large enough for the canoe to rest in without touching the water-stalks.

Above, the long, dagger-like blades drooped over from all sides, forming a beautiful archway or covering over them.

In this little arbor the youth permitted the canoe to rest. He concluded to wait here until he learned what dangers menaced them before advancing further.

They had been in this retreat but a few minutes when they heard voices. Peering out through the network of green, Harry saw a large party of mounted Sioux Indians, standing upon the bank in eager consultation.

It was Black Buffalo and his band, and in their midst was a prisoner bound and fettered. He was an Indian, and Harry recognized him at once as the cowardly Sac—Nora's late captor.

Keeping a steady eye upon their movements, the youth saw some of them dismount and search the ground closely. He then saw them gather in a knot near the place where the youth's horse had entered the river, and point and gesticulate in a significant manner.

In a few minutes half a dozen warriors sprang into the river and swam to the opposite shore. They searched the bank until they found where the horse had crossed. But whether they knew that the horse had not a burden upon his back and a hand to guide him, of course Harry knew not, but that they suspected something of the truth was evident, for they did not follow up the horse's trail.

Another consultation was now held, which ended in their all dismounting and making such arrangements as convinced the young ranger that they were going into a temporary encampment.

This caused him no little uneasiness. Had he been alone, he would not have cared; but when he gazed upon the little form nestled at his side, and saw her sweet, pretty face and dark eyes upturned to his confidently—resting with an apparent sense of security under his strong arm—it was an appeal that his manhood could not regard too highly.

With a steady eye he watched the redskins. He soon saw a number of the savages depart down the stream and some up the stream. What this movement indicated he was unable to tell, but, in the course of an hour, he saw two canoes coming up the stream, and still, a few minutes later, he saw another coming down. Then he knew it was the canoes that the redskins had gone in search of; and his fears were at once aroused, for he knew what might be expected now.

Several minutes he watched the Indians; then turning his gaze upon Nora, he said:

"We are now in great danger, Nora, yet by extreme caution we may elude our enemies. It'll require a keen pair of eyes to see us in this spot; but the savages all have keen eyes and ears; and should one come near, do not utter a word, nor move, even if he discovers us. And prepare yourself to witness dark deeds—such as may cause your soul to revolt with terror, for I shall fight to the last to save you—Ah!"

The light dip of an ear caught his ear, and called forth the exclamation. On peering through the foliage he saw a savage in a canoe skimming along the reeds.

"What is it, Hawkeye?" asked the maiden.

"An Indian coming this way, and I expect he's looking for our trail. But, let him come," and the youth took his side tomahawk and laid it at his feet.

"Oh, Hawkeye!" said the maiden, in a tone that showed how great was her reliance on the youth, "you are a brave and noble man, and are running many risks for me. But, my father will reward you well for all your kindness to me."

Hawkeye Harry smiled as he gazed down into the sweet young face of the maiden. The blood leaped in strong currents through his veins. Her gentle words had added a new power to the passion of love that was growing within his breast. In a moment of impulsiveness he replied:

"The boon that my heart already craves for my services in your behalf, Nora, is priceless; and none but you, and you alone, could bestow it upon me. Yet, it's not likely that a young girl like you would bestow such a gift upon a rough, uneducated trapper like me."

Involuntarily the maiden raised her eyes until they met those of her companion. She half suspected what he was aiming at, and a faint blush suffused her face. To Harry it spoke plainer than words, but her lips, tremulous with emotion, opened, and she asked:

"What is that gift, Harry?"

"Your love!"

The face of the maiden flushed crimson, and the long, dark lashes drooped shyly. Hawkeye Harry saw her lips quiver with some deep, inward emotion, then open to speak. The youth's heart ceased its wild flutter. It was an eventful moment to him, but before the first word had escaped Nora's lips, they were startled by a noise in the dry reeds—a quick noise, resembling the "t-wash" of a scythe through the bearded grain.

Harry glanced quickly around and saw the Indian, before mentioned, in the canoe, moving along the edge of the reeds, and ever and anon thrusting a long lance into the stalks, as though feeling for a hidden enemy. It was this that produced that peculiar sound that prevented Nora's reply.

Harry watched the Indian closely, and, as he saw him approach, nearer and nearer, he felt no little uneasiness through a fear that the red-skin might thrust his lance into their covert.

As a shield to her, in case he did, the youth quickly and silently interposed his body between the maiden and the Indian. In this he was not a moment too soon.

There came a sudden *crash* through the reeds; there was a vivid flash before Harry's eyes; then he felt a sharp, stinging sensation upon his cheek. He could scarcely restrain an exclamation, for it was the point of the Indian's lance that had just touched his face and punctured the skin. A little jet of blood sprouted from the wound, but with great presence of mind, the youth kept quiet and watched the movements of the Indian, whose body was partially visible.

At the same time, he was satisfied that he and Nora could not be seen in the shadows of the dense growth around him.

The young trapper was not a little surprised to see the Indian examine the point of his lance as soon as he had withdrawn it from the reeds.

Was it possible that his sense of feeling was so sensitive as to have felt the touch of the weapon upon the young man's cheek? Why does he stare so at the point of the lance?—why does he start?

Ah! his keen eyes detect something upon the polished weapon—*blood!*—that told of the presence of a living creature within the reeds!

The situation had indeed become critical. The savage laid his lance down, and rising to his feet, peered, with brows contracted, into the dense forest of stalks and overshadowing verdure. But, Harry was satisfied that his gaze did not penetrate their covert—of this he was soon convinced. The red-skin did not seem satisfied with his ocular search, for, turning the prow of the canoe, he reached forward, and paring the reeds, began drawing the craft in among them in the same manner that he had entered the thicket.

The young trapper felt his blood run cold, for he now saw that discovery was unavoidable. But, he prepared himself for the worst.

"Nora," he said, in a whisper to the maiden, "an Indian is approaching us, and our safety depends much on silence. Turn your eyes if you would not witness a bloody deed."

As he concluded, the youth grasped the handle of his tomahawk, ready for action. Nora, shuddering, turned her head and buried her face in her hands.

Slowly the savage approached—so silently that he created not a sound.

Within half an arm's length of our friends' canoe, the Indian's came to a stand.

Then, with tomahawk in hand, he leaned slightly forward and peered into the little arbor.

Hawkeye Harry saw the pupils of his black, scintillating eyes dilate with intense gazing, and knew that he was waiting for them to become accustomed to the shadows of the covert. He could see the veins standing out upon his naked arms and breast, and the workings and twitching of the facial muscles—all engendered by fear, uncertainty and expectancy.

Thus they remained for a moment; then the eyes of Hawkeye Harry and the savage met in an unflinching and deadly gaze.

Not a word nor a sound escaped the lips of either. But, together their murderous tomahawks rose; together they fell back upon their heels.

CHAPTER X.

HENRI ROCHE OUTWITTED.

"ROCHE!" Henri Roche, in the name of God come here!"

Had a voice called to Henri Roche from the grave he would not have started with more violence than when this voice fell upon his ears.

He gazed around him, his lips quivering with fear and his face ghastly white.

Half sitting and half reclining against a rock upon a little grass-plot near the edge of the creek, the outlaw chief saw the figure of a woman, dressed in faded garments, half-civilized and half-savage.

If her voice had startled him with fear, then the sight of her face paralyzed him with terror; and, like one in a stupor, he stood and gazed upon the reclining form that stared at him with the stony, icy look of a corpse.

The face was that of a woman. Her form and face wasted away to emaciation, yet her haggard features and large, mournful eyes were the relics of a once beautiful woman.

She might have been forty, and she might have been fifty years of age. There were a few threads of silver among her raven-black tresses of hair. Her whole being showed the indelible stamp of the destroying hand of trouble and sorrow.

Why should Henri Roche stare at a poor, helpless woman, his teeth fairly chattering with fear?

"Come nearer to me—come nearer, Henri Roche," the woman called, seeing he did not move. "Come; you need not fear me. I am dying—dying—the victim of your inhuman treachery and wickedness."

Henri Roche breathed easier. Though the voice and face of the woman had terrified him, he felt easier when she said she was dying, for her looks confirmed her words. His courage revived; he did not fear a dying woman, and advancing, he stepped near her and gazed down into the pale, upturned face.

It was then that he experienced that feeling of terrible and solemn awe that we all experience when we stand by the death-bed and gaze down upon the cold, clammy features of the dying—a feeling which never fails in its appeals to the hardest heart.

There was a settled expression upon the woman's thin face. Her thin nostrils were dilated and purple. Her lips were bloodless and drawn tightly over the pearly teeth; and the eyes—oh, who can paint the expression of the eyes of one standing upon life's brink, and fixed with a gaze, looking beyond the grave into a new transfiguration?

"Henri Roche!"

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed Roche, "is this true? Is it possible that I find you dying thus, Cecil Gray?"

"Yes, it is possible," replied the woman, faintly.

"How came you—"

"I came to seek you, Henri Roche," she broke in, "and heaven has at last brought us face to face. Roche, you are the author of all my misery and sorrow."

"Nay, nay, Cecil Gray," replied Roche, "you sinned my love. Then I told you I would have revenge, and I kept my word. I swore Willis Gray should never live with you, nor you with him, as man and wife. You knew the hot, revengeful blood of a Spaniard coursed my veins, and should not have crossed me."

"But, Roche, I did not love you."

"Nor did you love Gray. It was his wealth you married. This provoked me worse than all, and when I saw you lavishing your affections on your first-born—the child of Willis Gray—then I resolved to bleed your fickle heart by stealing that child and hiding it away where you would never find it. I did so—ay, more. I separated you and Gray! Mine, Cecil, has been a glorious revenge."

"Yes, yes; I admit it has, Roche," returned the woman, with a wild, stony gaze that caused him to shudder. "I can suffer but a little while longer, but let me die content, happy, Roche."

"If I can do any thing to soothe your mind, now that you are dying, I will do so gladly."

"You can, by telling me if my child lives, and if so, where she is."

A grim, triumphant smile overspread the face of the outlaw, as he replied:

"I am glad, Cecil, that in your last moments I can give you this information. But, had you lived twenty years longer, I would never have done so—no, never!"

"Oh, Henri Roche! the vengeance of Heaven will fall as heavily upon your soul as your vengeance has fallen upon my heart. But tell me, Roche, is my child alive?"

"She is."

"Thank God! Where is she?"

"I fear that information will brighten your last moments but little, Cecil."

"It is my dying request—pray tell me."

She placed, with her thin, emaciated hands outstretched imploringly.

"She is," said Roche, "in the Sioux village. She is the adopted daughter of Black Buffalo, the chief. She has grown to womanhood, and is very beautiful, and when I reach the village again, she will become the wife of him her mother rejected."

A groan escaped the woman's lips, and a fire of deadly vengeance flashed in her dark, sunken eyes, as she replied:

"Henri Roche, harm one hair of her head and Heaven's wrath will fall upon you!"

The heartless outlaw smiled mockingly, then replied:

"You should not let such bitter words fall from your lips, Cecil, when you are so soon to be summoned before the judgment bar. Let us talk more rationally now, forget the past, and—"

"Never! Go! leave me, heartless villain! the woman cried. Go! your presence is hateful!"

Roche turned, like one walking in his sleep, and moved away in deep thought. This interview had terribly agitated him, and when a dozen steps away, something forced him to stop, turn and gaze back.

He started as he did so, with a low cry of sudden fear.

He saw that he had been terribly deceived—outwitted. He beheld the supposed dying woman standing erect, and holding, leveled at his heart, a small gleaming rifle, along whose barrel he caught the steady and deadly glow of her dark eye.

Quick as thought the villain stepped aside. The rifle cracked, and the bullet sped harmlessly by him.

"Ha! ha! Cecil!" laughed the villain; "your aim is like your deathbed—false, untrue—a deception. Cunningly you wormed from me the secret of your child, but little good it will do you. You shall dog my footsteps no longer—you shall die in earnest. You made a demon of me, and so I care not for human life!"

The villain jerked his rifle to his shoulder and leveled it upon the woman.

Fear seemed to take possession of the wild, haggard-looking female, and turning, she ran toward the creek and leaped into the water.

The upraised rifle of the outlaw followed her form. She sprang upon some dark object thrust up from the bed of the stream; then, with a wild, mocking laugh—before the outlaw could fire—she sunk down from view in the creek as though it had opened to receive her.

Roche lowered his rifle in time to see the black object upon which she had stepped sink down in the stream also. Then for a moment followed the hollow rush of water near the mysterious spot, then all grew quiet, save the rush and roar of the rapids in the stream a few steps below.

For a moment Roche stood dumbfounded—terrified. But, at last, he mustered up the courage to advance and examine the creek where the woman had disappeared so mysteriously. He saw the water was a little muddy, and that particles of sand and gravel had been disturbed. This was all. The bed of the creek presented a firm, solid appearance.

What mystery was there about this creek? Was it haunted?—was that woman the spirit of Cecil Gray?

The more Henri Roche meditated over the matter, yea—the mystery, the more complicated his mind became. At last his courage gave way, and, filled with the most fearful apprehensions, he turned and fled from the spot—fled as though a hundred fiends were in pursuit of him.

He never stopped running until he reached his own camp.

"Boys, we have got to move on, this very night. We must reach Black Buffalo's village by to-morrow's sunset. And I want you Dubois," turning to the guide—"to hasten down the river until you come upon Black Buffalo's trail, and then follow him up until you overtake him. Tell him to send half of his warriors, at least, to his village immediately, as they will be needed there to protect it. But, tell him not to relinquish the search for the young Hawkeye and girl, until they are within his power. For that purpose he will need but a few men. Away!" His orders were those of a man in haste and anxiety.

Dubois caught his horse, and in a few minutes was galloping down the river. Roche and the rest of his party saddled up their jaded animals, and mounting, were soon on their way toward the village of Black Buffalo, situated upon Lake Okibige, several leagues to the northward.

The sad face and mournful eyes of Cecil Gray followed him—were ever present to his guilty soul's vision.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 116.)

Hercules, the Hunchback:

The Fire-Fiends of Chicago.

A REVELATION OF THE GREAT CONFLAGRATION.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "FLAMING TALISMANS," "WOODWIND," "BLACK CRESCENT," "BLACK HAND," ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

ZONE'S STORY TOLD.

MORTIMER GASCON, as he listened to the strange story Zone was telling, raised to his elbow, and grew impatient for her to proceed.

After a short pause, she resumed:

"When Carl Grand had buried his mother, he immediately went to work to carry out the fearful oath of the bullet-scar."

With two hired assassins, he struck out the life of Evard Greville. Then, when the vile deed was done, and he had once dyed his heart in wickedness, a bold plan formed itself in his mind. He knew that he was an exact counterpart of the murdered man, and he resolved to personate him. It had been several years since Greville left his home, and, with this to further aid him, he started North, coming to Chicago, where he was received by the family as their son.

But there is a parallel here, Nelson Greville and his wife had a daughter, named Europe. This daughter was taken to Europe, at an early age, to perfect her education. About this time she was returning to her home. It is a strange coincidence that Hermoine, also, had a counterpart: a classmate of hers, named Delia Rivers, who resembled her so closely that it was only when they stood side by side you could perceive a difference.

This woman, Delia Rivers, was companion to Hermoine on the homeward trip. She was a beautiful being; but with nothing besides her education to sustain her—and keen wits. They were in New Orleans, Delia Rivers, during the voyage across the ocean, had conceived a plan precisely like that which took Carl Grand northward, viz: to represent herself as Hermoine Greville, and thus throw herself at once into the independent ease of wealth. To do this, Hermoine—her unsuspecting and loving friend—must be first removed. And she was.

By an artful use of poison, the foully-betrayed Hermoine was put to sleep forever. Of course, there was great excitement in the city—here had been four mysterious deaths within a month. But I will not dwell on particulars too much. It was a fateful combination which threw me into company where I saw this woman. Though my complexion was dark, I possessed a tolerable knowledge of the Spanish language—being educated with great care by a professor whom my father employed to travel with us, during the first few years of our chase after Burt Grand—and it being rumored that I had considerable money, I was known as a Spanish heiress, and mingled freely in society.

"She was remaining in New Orleans until the excitement should lull—having given her own name to the authorities as that of the dead girl; and afterward telegraphing to Nelson Greville that she, Hermoine, would reach her home in a short time."

While thus stopping, she was, unfortunately, seized with a burning love for a young man who, while he admired her beauty and accomplishments, never once thought of reciprocating her passion. It was known that I had lost my father, since coming to New Orleans, and was entirely alone; and this, coupled with personal attractions—for I was considered beautiful—drew upon me many, very many kind attentions. Prominent among those who devoted themselves to pleasing me was the young man on whom Delia Rivers—or the false Hermoine—had centered her affection, and toward some deep injury to me. I would not have believed that one so lovely would do what she did, but listen, and you shall learn what a fiend she was.

"I retired, one night, with a queer feeling in my heart—a presentiment of pending danger. And I was not uselessly worried. I shall never forget with what thrills of horror I was aroused, just as a distant clock struck one, to find three masked figures standing beside me. But, even in my fright, I snatched a pistol from beneath my pillow—I always slept with the weapon there after my father's death—and fired, with a hurried, hopeless aim. The shot was not fatal, though it hit its mark. There was a shrill cry—a woman's voice; and I recognized Delia Rivers, my enemy. They disarmed me, dragged me from my bed to the middle of the room, then bound and gagged me. Delia Rivers saw that I had discovered her identity, and she removed the mask. It is impossible for me to describe the dark, dark look that was in her face—it was awful. Now I perceived that she was there for a terrible purpose. Before me was a small charcoal furnace, glowing red, and two long irons were heated in it. She pointed to these irons, spat upon me, called me vile names; and I was not long in fully comprehending the intense peril of my situation."

"How they ever got into my room so quietly I do not know. One of them was rummaging over the contents of my trunk, and he found a package tied with a black ribbon, sealed with a black seal. It was my father's will, with a record of his life—both of incalculable value to me. Delia Rivers seized it, and, to this day, I have been striving in vain to recover it."

"When the iron in the furnace was heated red, this fiend-woman took it from the glowing mass, and flourished it before my eyes. I saw what her diabolical intentions were. By every possible motion, by tears, by frightened looks, I implored her to desist from her horrible plan. But she was a fiend incarnate! While the two men held me tight—even partially stopping my nostrils, so that I could scarce groan—she advanced, and swept the hot iron across my face—"

"God!—can such a thing be possible?" cried Mortimer Gascon, who was being acutely worked upon by these revelations.

"If you doubt it, then look at me!"

As Zone spoke, she quickly tore away the mask that concealed her face; and, simultaneously, another cry broke from Gascon's lips.

Hers had indeed been lovely features, at one time, for, even now, while the scars of the burns alluded to branded her with frightful disfigurement, there were still traces of symmetrical beauty.

It was a painful sight—nearly all semblance of herself forever lost; nothing left but those dark, lustrous eyes, whose depth of glance and expression were enchanting.

He was, for a moment, dumbstruck.

"You see, Mortimer Gascon?—it is her work!—the work of the lovely creature who fondled on your neck only a short time ago, while you believed her to be your niece, and innocent of wrong. But, now you have seen. I told you it were better for you not to see."

"No, no; I am glad you did this. But, go on—go on. What else?"

"While engaged in her hellish work," continued Zone, readjusting the mask, "there was an interruption. I had swooned from pain and terror, and the portion I tell you now, I learned afterward. At first intimation of discovery, Delia Rivers escaped unseen. And, before she fled—roused to a pitch of frenzied excitement, by what she had been doing—she struck at my heart with a poniard. God preserved me from the deadly intent of that blow, though the scar is yet fresh on my bosom."

"The intruder on the scene was Hercules, the Hunchback. I will not stop to explain how he happened there, so opportunely; but, he was there, knew what was going on, and arrived just in time—for, I doubt not, she would have burned me to death ere she left me. Hercules came into the room by one door, as the two men escaped through another. He pursued them to the roof of the house. As he stepped out, to do battle with them, they took advantage of his position, and knocked him from the roof. How he was saved from death, in that fall, is a miracle. But when the accomplices of Delia Rivers returned to the room where they had left me, I was gone."

"The negro, the modier of the Quadroon—whose name was Lu—with Hercules. When he pursued the ruffians to the roof, she grasped me up in her arms, and carried me off. It was a long, long time before I knew that I lived. When I did begin to realize my sad state, Hercules was lying near me, unable to move, so severe had been his injuries from the fall."

"It seems that, when my father and I started in pursuit of the murderers of the Quadroon, the funds left to support Lu soon dwindled down, till (not knowing where we were) she was obliged to go out as a servant. The same fate which created every entanglement of the history I am now telling you, led her to the house of the Greville."

"Yes, I remember well having seen her there," broke in Gascon.

"When Carl Grand came as Evard Greville, she did not recognize in him the boy she had seen, years back, as the son of Burt Grand. Almost immediately upon his arrival, Nelson Greville died suddenly. Mrs. Greville soon followed—the third victim to the oath of the bullet-scar. Lu detected the murderer when he had poisoned the orphaned child Carl, and, using promptly all the powerful antidotes she knew of, this life was saved. She fled to New Orleans, taking the child with her. But she sent the child to a place of safety, a long time before she herself departed from the house, which was after the coming of the second impostor."

"Delia Rivers hastened to Chicago, in the character of Hermoine

any further in his oath of the bullet-scar? Hercules, Lu and myself came to Chicago, to carry out our plans. We all had hurts to mend, and vows to keep; for the same two men who assisted Delia Rivers in her outrage upon me, had attempted Lu's life shortly after she arrived in New Orleans, believing her to have money hid away.

"It was then that Hercules made known to me the part he had played at the death of the Quadron. I believed his story, believed him innocent—do believe so still. He said, though he was so much older than I, he would be a brother to me. And he kept his word. A brother could not be more kind than he has been, even if he is, at times, rather blunt spoken.

"On coming to Chicago, I assumed the role of a fortune-teller. Lu sought a home to herself, with the child Carl in her care, intending, at an early date, when we had arranged matters thoroughly, to expose the impostors. To carry out my vow of hate against Delia Rivers, I saw that I had but to destroy Carl Grand's love for her, and he would sacrifice her in his oath of vengeance. I laid my plans accordingly, and soon had the satisfaction of trapping my game. By mystifications and delusive speeches, I won his love. He would gladly wed me, to-morrow, if I were to consent, although he has never seen my face. Delia Rivers, therefore, will die!

"Lu, the negress, in reply to questions I put to her, said she had seen a roll of MS., tied with a black ribbon, sealed with a black seal; had seen Delia Rivers place it carefully away in an old desk that was in the house; and I resolved that Carl Grand should be the means of giving me back my inheritance.

"But, I like to have forgotten: Trix, my brother, never saw me, from the time John Lisle started to hunt down his enemies, until I returned to Chicago. We had not long been here when he came to my house, seeking employment. I recognized him, but, for cogent reasons, did not let him know it. Hercules, also, knew who it was. He was a miserable, half-starved boy, and this prevailed upon me, besides the fact of his relationship, to take him in. I never treated him as a servant, and he must have noticed it. But, after what has transpired to-night—much that you have not seen—I believe that Trix was sent by his grandmother, Lala, to destroy Hercules—having impressed it upon his mind that the Hunchback was the true murderer of the Quadron."

Zone paused at this point, as if her narrative was concluded.

"Is there no more?" inquired Gascon, with quick warmth.

"There may be much more; but I have told you all I can. Do you believe now that—no, state; that you have not seen—I believe that Trix was sent by his grandmother, Lala, to destroy Hercules—having impressed it upon his mind that the Hunchback was the true murderer of the Quadron."

"Yes, I remember his being there when I arrived."

"The false Hermoine had asked Carl Grand what had caused the sudden decease of her father and mother. In reply he informed her that their uncle—*you*—had poisoned them."

"God! what a wretch!"

"He further said that he had sworn, by the seat in the palm of his hand, to have your life. You were coming to his house soon, and he called upon her, in the name of the dead, to assist. She, fully his equal in wickedness, readily acquiesced; for she saw that this would increase their wealth. By skillful management on the part of Hercules, you have been saved to confound them."

"And I will!" he interrupted, vehemently. "Once let me get strong again, and I will be only too eager to crush the vipers that have been stinging at my life, and usurping the heirloom of Greville. But, tell me, how did Hercules get into the employ of this murderous scoundrel?"

Whatever reply Zone would have made it was stayed by the opening of the door, and one of the women of the house said:

"Here's a gentleman who says he must see you."

Zone uttered a cry. Mortimer Gascon, gazed in astonishment.

The unexpected visitor was Eyard Greville—the owner of the pale face that had appeared at the library window of the large house near Union Park.

CHAPTER XXVI
A STRANGE CURE.

So sudden and systematic was the delivery of the blow which felled the Hunchback—well calculated, sped with all the force of hate, by an arm nerve to its greatest strength—that the victim was partially stunned, completely surprised, a close prisoner within the passage of a few seconds.

Little Carl slipped from his arms, and fell heavily. But the child made no sound; remaining quietly prostrate till he should be spoken to—for he knew that they were in trouble, readily perceived that the occupants of the house were their enemies—and he waited, listening, half fearing that the terrible stroke had killed his protector.

In the center of the ceiling of the room which was now the Hunchback's prison, was a small skylight, through which a dim, uncertain glimmer, caused by the configuration, quivered and broke the thick murkiness of surrounding objects.

At one side was a fire-place. The top of this fire-place, inside, was firmly shut with an arch of brick; but, on that side next to the room in which the maniac was confined, there was an exit, cunningly contrived—and by this means, Lala had disappeared; crying out the significant words from between the walls which struck like a knell into the ears of her enemy.

Lala emerged from the fire-place into Hermoine's presence.

The maniac was sitting upon the floor, with her head bowed, swaying gently as she worked and twisted her fingers through her long, disheveled hair.

"She does not see me," thought the Indian woman, as she glided, swift and noiseless, across the apartment.

Jose was on the outside, prompt in carrying out the plan that was understood between them.

She glanced at Hermoine—then gave one quick, loud knock on the door.

"Lala!"

"Yes, Hurry."

In another moment she was out of the room, and Jose unlocked the door. But the maniac had seen her. No sooner was she gone than Hermoine started up; and while her strangely brilliant eyes lighted with a peculiar sparkle, and an unreadable expression dwelt in her disfigured, blood-stained face, she glanced alternately toward the door and the fire-place; then advanced to

the latter on tiptoe, examining it curiously.

"That queer woman again!" she said to herself. "Who can she be? So ugly, too! Here—she came out of here. I saw her. That's funny—the place hasn't any hole in it—no. I wonder how she did it?"

She continued thus, all the while looking and fingering about the interior of the chimney.

Miguel had joined his captain when Lala came out, having assured himself that the Hunchback was safely caged.

She frowned on the bulky Spaniard, as she caught Jose by the arm and half dragged him back to the medicine room.

"Fool! you have left my lotion to burn!" she exclaimed. "Back with you! and stir it quickly, or the captain will die!"

"Cospita! he must not die!" cried Miguel, as he returned in haste to the pan.

And he was just in time. Another second of neglect, and the stuff would have been ruined.

"Smell this," he muttered, vigorously twisting the ladle round and round. "I am sick with it. Captain, this is a foul liquid of poison!"

"Mind your duty, there, and talk less," snapped the woman.

"Eugh! Can I do more than I am at?" sharp and savage.

"He is safe—safe!" said Lala to Jose, as she made the latter lie down again on the bed.

The exertion had cost him dear, for he was now too weak to reply. She saw this; and when she had fixed him comfortably, she turned her attention to the steaming pan.

"It is done. You may leave off."

Miguel was glad to retire. He went to the bedside of his captain, and while he still regarded Lala covertly, he whispered:

"Are you sure that tiger is safe? If he should get out, he will claw us to pieces in a minute."

"Cease your gabble!" commanded Lala, who overheard him. "Can I not talk to you who do not see it? Wait till I have done with him."

"You are an old snarl—dragon!" growled Miguel.

"Peace!"

"Peace it is, then."

She prepared a large, thick plaster, or poultice, and soon had it applied to the wound. Next she held a small vial beneath the nose of her patient with one hand, while, with the other, she occasionally wet his lips with the contents of a second vial—presently bidding Miguel hold his hands tightly.

A perceptible effect was soon produced. The plaster acted on the wound; the inhalation and swelling threw him into a dozing, drowsy state; and Lala gravely watched the progress of the cure.

"Hisi!" said Miguel, "his hands are hot as coals. As I live, he will burn up!"

"Silence! Hold tight!"

"But, there are sparks here, too! The devil—this man is a battery; for I am trembling; and ticklish quivers are going through me!"

Suddenly the patient's arms contracted, with a jerk, and it was so unexpected that Miguel nearly let go.

"Hold tight. Straighten them out—rub," ordered Lala.

He was mystified, and obeyed in silence.

The fever relaxed at a rapid rate; and the Indian woman soon nodded her head with satisfaction, as Jose seemed to fall into an easy, refreshing sleep.

She motioned him away; and they stood off, looking at the still form.

"Let him slumber—it works well. All is right."

"How long?" questioned the Spaniard, under his breath.

"Not many minutes."

"Are you sure of that?"

"How? Am I a charlatan? Hold your tongue, or you will make trouble for yourself."

"I do not like the looks of this," persisted Miguel, dubiously.

"Of what? Whom?"

"The captain. See—he is white as death."

"He is not dead, though; nor will he die. Fear nothing."

"Look now; if he should die—by the tooth of Satan! I'll have your life!"

Cut short by a movement on the part of the woman, who made a quick step toward him, raising her claw-like hands, as if to scratch, and uttering a sound like the puss-growl and spit of a cat.

Being totally unprepared for such a demonstration, Miguel jumped backward to escape her—striking his head against the half-open door with a force that brought stars to his vision.

"Now be still," she said, chuckling.

"I could strangle you!" he hissed, while he rubbed his head.

"Try it," she bantered.

But Miguel stood too much in awe of her to attempt it.

"See," continued Lala; "already he wakes."

Jose's eyelids were slightly trembling.

After a brief space he sighed heavily, then opened his eyes.

"You feel better?" asked the Indian woman, looking down at him.

"Yes. Is it all over?"

"There was nothing done. I only put you to sleep. Get up now."

Jose arose. To his surprise, he found that nearly all his former strength had returned.

Miguel, in an ecstasy of delight, embraced him.

"Remember," said Lala, "I told you I would cure you for twenty-four hours. Now you are a strong man; but be sure and return to me in time, else you may die at a breath."

Jose Moreno drew a knife from his breast, and felt of its keen edge.

"Miguel, you will await me here. I am off on business."

"Business, captain?—and with a knife? But you should take me—"

"It can not be so," interrupted Jose. "I must go alone. Will you obey me?"

"Any thing you say, captain. But, the Hunchback!" his eyes widening at the sudden thought. "What if he should break out? We shall be devoured without a chance!"

"Pah!" exclaimed the crone.

"No danger," Jose assured him.

He left the room, left the house—moved rapidly along the street.

The course he pursued was in the direction of Union Park.

If I can but find Carl Grand," he muttered, clenching his fists and scowling ominously. "I will square my account with him! He tried to kill me, eh?—tried to kill

Jose Moreno, who served him well as a tool once. Better that he had drank of poison! He shall die!—die! I am resolved on it. So I've got the boy in hand again? I might let Carl Grand live, and yet be rich myself, if Lala can cure this 'curst wound—no, no, no; Carl Grand shall die!"

He soon reached the house. The broken doorway afforded him an easy entrance.

Gaining the house, he advanced, with a cat-like stealth, and grasped the bright-bladed knife hard and firm by the hilt.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 110.)

Floy's Hero.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

It was "on the beach at Long Branch" where Floy first met him. She was promenading with her stepmother, who kept close ward over her, for Floy was a willful, perverse little minx, with about as much forthright as a kitten, and apt to indulge in whims with a vivid enjoyment of the shock inflicted on the proprieties as personified in said mamma.

It was not wonderful that her giddy little head had scarcely recovered a correct equilibrium since she was brought out, two years before; she had created a *furore* then, with her artless manner, her childlike innocence, and peach-blossom beauty, and two years of society wear and tear had not tended to lessen her favoritism.

It made no difference to Floy that other belles, envious of her popularity, spoke of her disparagingly as a "pink-and-white doll," a "baby-face"; she only laughed at their petty malice, and revenged herself by flirting with their lovers.

But now single beauties began to breathe freely again. It was known that Floy had become involved in the serious tangle of a matrimonial engagement, and that the trousseau was ordered for the early town season. Meanwhile, of course, the lighter fetters of betrothal would warn new aspirants from the hitherto-contested field.

Though such was the received impression, the young lady herself had no idea of relinquishing her conquests while liberty remained to her. So proper, watchful mamma kept a sharp eye on Floy's conduct, and succeeded in nipping sundry promising flirtations in the bud.

This engagement had little of the flavor of a love-match about it, so unromantically smooth had the course to it run. Duke Crayton was a whole-souled, tender-hearted young giant, who regarded tiny Floy as the apple of his eye, and being the fortunate possessor of an unlimited stock of solid as well as dainty, inherited from some dead-and-gone Crayton, who had considerably shuffled off the mortal coil soon as Duke's established character and spotless integrity rendered him a worthy recipient of such good fortune—he had no difficulty in urging his pretensions to Floy's favor, his suit ratified by papa's gracious consent.

Floy herself scarcely gave the matter a second thought. She said "yes" in a matter-of-fact way to a decidedly matter-of-fact proposal, and fluttered away, butterfly fashion, after the sweets she had been used to cull. A very exemplary wooing, and satisfactory in effect, until—to reiterate—she met her ideal hero on the beach at Long Branch.

A stranger, *distingue* in appearance, she singled him out of the familiar crowd with greater interest than she often deigned to bestow. She raised her eyes in passing to meet the ardent glance of his dark orbs with such an air of innocent surprise, you never would have suspected the little coquette had purposely fluttered that way. She dropped her sunshade, accidentally, of course, and the stranger restored it with a low bow; while she murmured her thanks, some privileged mutual friend sauntered close enough to introduce the two. That was the beginning of Floy's hero-worship.

It was a beginning, too, of a flirtation which outraged the proprieties and called forth maternal remonstrance.

"Mamma," cried Floy, indignantly. "He's a hero, a regular hero of romance, that's what he is. Such a delightful air of mystery clinging about him, and such unfathomable depths in his big dark eyes. I never saw any one half so handsome before. Oh, you needn't throw Duke Crayton up to me every hour in the day; I'm sure he doesn't compare with Mr. Hoyt, and it's not my fault if I am engaged to him. Thank fortune, I'm not married yet!"

"Floy!"

"If I'm to be snapped up in this way every time another man looks at me, I'll not stay engaged; and if Duke wants to play ogle, he might at least be at hand to perform the duty of escort while he gowls the other ones down. Does he expect me to stay indoors and meep myself blue, with plenty of gentlemen to act my attendant cavaliers until he comes? Now, mamma, he's not that selfish and exacting."

"I dare say Duke would think it perfectly consistent if you were to start a balloon to visit the planets," declared mamma, a little rashly. "I appeal to your own common sense, Floy, if it is proper to have your name familiarly linked with that of a perfect stranger, and you not free to receive marked attentions. I'm sure Mr. Forde will wait upon you at any time."

"I hate common sense, and I despise Mr. Forde—a snuffy old bachelor," asserted Floy. "And I'm going boating with Mr. Hoyt this very afternoon!"

"You shall do nothing of the kind, Miss. What's to prevent?" asked Floy, sharply.

"If you are disobedient, I shall report to your father immediately. It is my expressed desire that you hold no further communication with that person until we are assured he is really a gentleman."

Floy pursed her pretty lips into shape for whistling as she turned to adjust her gipsy hat before the cheval glass.

"Where are you going, child?"

"To keep my engagement, to be sure."

"With Mr. Hoyt?"

"Must I repeat that I forbid your going?"

"Must I repeat that it is my intention?" mimicked Floy.

The stepmother was infuriated at having her authority so completely set at naught.

"You shall not go!" she said, angrily. "I will lock you in your room before I permit it."

Floy faced about with defiant eyes.

"Do, and I'll raise the house. Now, mamma, just listen to reason, will you? If I'm to be hedged in from all sorts of amusements, I'll break off with Duke to-morrow. Why can't you let well enough alone, while I'm contented to take him when the proper time comes?"

"I'll not be responsible for your acts another day!" cried the elder lady, in despair. "I'll pack up and go back to town in the morning."

Floy coolly shook some essence of lavender over her costly mouchoir, and left the irate mamma to put her threat into partial execution. A freak of destiny baffled her intention, and placed her under an obligation to Mr. Hoyt which she could not well ignore.

He came home from the boating excursion bearing Floy's unconscious weight, the bright hair streaming away from her pallid face, and her garments dripping with ocean brine.

The boat had sprung a leak far out from shore, and gone down despite his utmost efforts to keep it afloat. With much difficulty he had succeeded in swimming ashore with his precious burden, but Floy had fainted through fright, and for a few days following assumed the role of an interesting invalid. Mr. Hoyt was unremitting in his delicate attentions, and actually won upon the stepmother's good graces so far as to insure kindly receptions.

One day, when she was convalescent, he surprised Floy alone upon the shaded veranda.

"Do you know," he said, "you have never thanked me for saving your life? It is very sweet to think that you owe it to me."

"I am very grateful," she returned, shyly. "Papa will be here in another day to express his thanks—and Duke."

"Duke?"

"Duke Crayton, you know. I'm engaged to marry him," with a sigh accompanying the announcement.

The gentleman started, melo-dramatically, and turned the light of his speaking eyes upon her.

"Have I only reared bright visions to have them swept away?" he asked, sadly. "Oh, Floy, heartless one, to let me love you so! How could you?"

"I am sorry," she faltered, and her blushing, tearful face challenged him to urge his case.

"Floy, sweet, will you give up the old love for me? Be mine, and such wealth and state as you have not dreamed of shall be yours. I have wooed you as plain Willbert Hoyt; know me now as Count D'Arnaud. Will you be a countess, fair Floy, and reign in my castle on the sunny Garonne?"

Silly Floy! Such a dazzling prospect quite intoxicated the giddy brain.

"Poor Duke," she murmured, regretfully, and her companion covered her hand with rapturous kisses.

"Think not of him," he exclaimed. "Ah, how I am blest. How have I merited such happiness, *petite*—my lady countess that is to be!"

There was a sound of clapping hands and faint applause near them.

"*Bien!* well done, monsieur," cried a clear, ringing voice, and a black-eyed little lady, in hat and traveling dress, stepped into view.

"Pardon, that I should interrupt such a charming scene. You scarcely improve, monsieur, you are perfect; you protested just so to me—oh! years ago. Stay, my good Count D'Arnaud! Hear me tell the lady that I am your wife; that we wedded when you were Alphonse, the *garcon*—a miserable cook; and now—*mon Dieu!*—a count. You forgot to relate that the castle is in the air, and never in sunny France. Stay, let me entreat! not to hurry but a moment, *monseigneur*. I follow him, lady. We are happy, very happy, in agreeing to disagree. Alphonse loves adventure, I grow weary of so dull a home, and we separate. But I watch and check him when he would forget my claims. I go—adieu."

So Floy's hero crumbled into dust.

I am glad to write that honest-hearted Duke was none the worse for her short infatuation, as she learned to appreciate his worth more truly after her giddy brain was sobered somewhat by her sudden awakening from hero-worship.

change her determination. Like many another willful maiden, she did not mean to be taken so quickly at her word.

But Will Burgess was proud, too, so the foolish young things, pretending to insure their happiness, insured their misery by keeping apart.

They met sometimes, because, in company, it could not be avoided, but they scrupulously treated each other with the cold politeness due to mere acquaintances.

One evening there was a little social party at Squire Kennedy's, and Lucy and Will were there. It was an informal affair, at which everybody did as they pleased. They talked a little, danced a little, and after a while made a call for music.

Now Lucy and Will were both fine singers, and had been in the habit of singing duets. Old Squire Kennedy specially requested a song from them, and, unwilling to disoblige their host, Lucy felt forced to consent.

She allowed Will to lead her to the piano, but to her dismay, Mary Kennedy, who was playing the accompaniment, selected Schubert's serenade for them to sing.

They had often sung it together—in the days of happy love it had been a favorite, but now, Lucy felt that it would be a difficult task to get over.

To refuse, however, would be to attract just the attention she wished to avoid. She summoned all her courage, and with a flood-tide of sweet memories rushing over heart and brain, joined her clear soprano with Will's deep, mellow voice in the tender words:

"All the stars keep watch in Heaven,
While I sing to thee!
And the night for love was given—
Dearest, come to me!"

But as the low, soft melody thrilled and died on the air, Lucy's heart filled to overflowing, and when it was ended, she made her escape as quickly as possible, and went through the long, open window, out upon the deserted veranda, where the stars, indeed, "kept watch in Heaven," and she need not hush her heart to silence. But she did not escape so quickly as to be quite unnoticed. As she leaned against one of the tall columns, a swift, firm step came down the veranda to her side.

She did not look up, but a gentle hand touched her shoulder, and well she knew the voice which said, so kindly and unsteadily:

"The night for love was given—
Dearest, come to me!"

And as he repeated the words, Will's arm found its way mysteriously across Lucy's shoulders, and drew her close to his broad breast. "Lucy, forgive me!" he whispered.

"Oh, Will, I, not you, should ask forgiveness," sobbed Lucy. "I have been so foolish."

"Not half as foolish as I have," answered Will. "Lucy, dear, I believe the truth is, we have both been exceedingly silly. Supposing we come to our senses, and agree to forgive and forget?"

"There is nothing to forgive, dear Will, and do not let us forget. Let us remember it as a wholesome lesson for the future."

"So we will! Meanwhile, I shall put this on again." And Master Will drew from his pocket the little ring with its quaint German device, and slipped it over Lucy's finger.

Lucy raised her small hand in the moonlight, and looked at the motto: "Oh, Will!" she said, "my ring ought to have taught me better than to be so selfish and hasty. I did not stop to think of thee—it was only 'myself'."

"But it is both now, darling," said Will, drawing her closer to him; "and Heaven willing, it shall be so for the rest of our lives. Shall it not, dear?"

And if Lucy had answered any thing else than a faint "Yes," she must have been less than woman.

The Air-Dust we Breathe.—Professor Tyndall is proving and illustrating to the English people how much poisonous dust there is in the air we breathe in and out of doors. To catch in water the floating matter of the air at Manchester, Dr. Smith placed a small quantity of the liquid in a bottle and shook it up with successive charges of air. In one instance he did this five hundred times, and then handed over his bottle to an able microscopist, Mr. J. B. Dancer, for examination. The bottle had been shaken in the open air, through which, however, Dr. Smith could not see any dust blowing; at all events, if there were dust, it was only such as people are called upon to breathe. Here are some of the revelations of Mr. Dancer:

Spores or sporidia appeared in numbers; and, to ascertain as nearly as possible the numerical proportion of these bodies in a single drop of the liquid, the contents of the bottle were well shaken, and then one drop was taken up with a pipette. This was spread out by compression to a circle half an inch in diameter. A magnifying power was then employed which gave a field of view of an area exactly one-hundredth of an inch in diameter; and it was found that more than one hundred spores were contained in this space. Consequently the average number of spores in a single drop would be two hundred and fifty thousand. These spores varied from ten-thousandths to fifty-thousandths of an inch in diameter.

Saturday Journal

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MR. ALBERT W. AIKEN'S

Great Dramatic Romance!

We commence in next week's SATURDAY JOURNAL the long-promised story upon which is founded the author's noted drama, viz:

ROYAL KEENE.

THE CALIFORNIA DETECTIVE;

OR,

The Witches of New York.

A ROMANCE OF FOUR GIRLS' LIVES.

The repeated and pressing calls for this romance have impelled the author to write it out, at this present time, when the interest in the playing dramatic version is so general; and being a "labor of love," he has produced a story of the most intense interest.

Although, in some of its features, resembling Aggie Penne's beautiful serial, "The Orange Girl," which already has appeared in these columns—it is yet unlike it in its leading elements, only certain incidents of "The Witches," by the author's consent, having been incorporated in "The Orange Girl."

In this we have the dramatic version put into consecutive narrative form, and a most bewitching story it is. The following may be mentioned as in its character list:

The Young and Beautiful Actress.

The Dashing, Light-hearted Dancing-girl.

The Poor Slave of the Sewing-machine.

The Heartless Fifth Avenue Belle.

The Vile Hag of Water Street.

The Drunken Tomb Lawyer.

The daring and reckless California Detective.

The Noble Red-man from the Plains.

The English Lord "doing" America.

The Irish Lawyer and Politician.

The Dramatic Editor of the Daily Trombone.

The Wealthy Scion of an old N. Y. Family.

The Fifth Ave. "Blood" who says "Yas."

The Old Savant from India's Jungles.

Abrams, the Diamond-Broker.

It is, essentially, a life revelation. The dark veil that conceals the festering crimes of our great metropolis are rent asunder by a daring and skillful hand. From the be-diamonded inmate of the Fifth Avenue palace, to the ragged wretch, who dies by inches in the damp basement of the Water street hotel, none escape the keen pen of the most daring—yet always pure—writer who has ever told the sad story of our great city's life.

It is such "romances of real life" as these that do positive good by "holding the mirror up to nature," and presenting to readers human nature unmasked. The use of fiction and the drama is so to reproduce life, men and manners that the impression shall be lasting. If certain repulsive phases of life are obtruded, and the impression is not one to make the reader or reader better, it is a base use of the stage and the page. Mr. Aiken discriminates with perfect sagacity; and his plays and romances alike, while they are highly intense in dramatic action and motif, are yet very admirable in their mental and moral effects. His is the true "sensational"—exciting, strange, mysterious and intense, but thoroughly good and thoroughly real. It is this which has given him his pre-eminence, and which, in the future, is to make his name a household word, and give him a loving recognition in all circles.

"Royal Keene" will undoubtedly be the best story of city life that Mr. Aiken has ever written, and those who have perused the "Ace of Spades," "Scarlet Hand," etc., can judge how much we are saying by this assertion.

No better proof of Mr. Aiken's popularity as a writer can be given, than the fact that he has been offered his own price for a serial story by one of our wide-awake contemporaries; but, as the gentleman has signed a contract with us for a term of years, until that time expires he will not write for any other paper than the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

Our Arm-Chair.

Chat.—A lady of Ohio wants us to explain what we mean by the rhythm of her poem being imperfect. It is not in the power of a paragraph to answer, but the very query betrays her ignorance of the first laws of rhythmic composition. Refer to any grammar of composition and there you will find all necessary rules and instruction. It is a singular fact that large numbers of persons writing verse for the press are not familiar with the laws and construction of poetry. Guided solely "by the ear," they sometimes write very musical lines, but are quite as apt to violate all canons of correct expression. No person should essay poetic composition until he or she has at least a passing knowledge of rhythmic essentials.

Tendency of young men to abandon all trades that demand hard work, and to seek such employments as permit the wearing of good clothes and comparative ease of living, is now showing its evil results, in all directions. There are ten times as many clerks, book-keepers, salesmen, professionals, "agents," reporters, actors, men-who-live-by-their-wits, commissioners, etc., etc., as there is any need for, while the trades and the farms are scant of workers, and foreigners are coming in, by thousands, to fill up these vacant places. The result will be that our trades will be given over to foreigners—a consummation by no means to be wished. There is, however, just this hope, namely, as necessity is the spur to action, our young men will be driven into the trades and to husbandry in order to get an honest living. Thousands come to the cities for employ, but find it so hard to get any thing to do that they return home, quite content to

think seriously of the workshop and farm; and from the change that must follow, we hope great good to result—good to the immensely-overstocked professions and commercial callings, and good to the general industry of the country by the infusion of a strong and true American element.

Henry F. De C. writes to know what he shall do. Horace Greeley, he says, advises young men never to run in debt and to pay his way as he goes, but he can't go and "pay his way," etc., etc. Like a great many of Mr. Greeley's crotchets this idea of never going in debt is to be taken with a good many qualifications. The best fortunes in this country have been made by "going into debt;" and, after a pretty thorough experience, we have come to the conclusion that those young men succeed best who go into debt for a farm or a business, or some good property, and then bend all their energies to paying for their purchase. So, to a hearty, hopeful young man we say—Go in Debt—prudently assuming no more obligation than you can, with fair luck and good health, meet. Go in Debt, for it will spur you on to labor that otherwise you would never do.

"Ned Hazel" writes, saying: "Allow me to speak a few words in regard to the SATURDAY JOURNAL. It is, without doubt, the best paper printed in New York city. I take three of the New York State Papers, but your journal simply outstrips them all in the downright interest and reading value of its matter." Ned would be surprised to be called a plagiarist, but the fact that we have dozens of letters which say just the same thing, would lead to the inference either that there is a remarkable unanimity of opinion among readers, or that they have all hit upon the same idea! In either case, we accept the responsibility and bow our gracious thanks.

As to what is proper in bathing (in answer to "An Invalid"), we can only repeat what Dr. Hall says, viz: that many persons have lost their lives by getting chilled in the process of bathing; sometimes by going into the bath too soon after eating. No person should take any kind of bath sooner than three hours after a regular meal, and the room should show a heat of seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, at about five feet above the floor in the middle of the room, in order to avoid dangerous chills; persons of a feeble circulation should have the room still warmer; if there is an uncomfortable feeling of coldness to the body, when it comes out of the water, the room is too cold.—Hall's Journal of Health.

WAITING FOR THE TRAIN.

Dro you ever have to sit in a little out-of-the-way railway station for half a dozen mortal hours, waiting for the train?

I have had to undergo that infliction recently, and my earnest prayer is, that I may be spared going through it again. Added to the tedium of waiting were many other things that made me wish myself safe at home; one of which was a man with a good deal of hair on his face, and redness on his nose—that was produced by the cold—and who had the audacity to take a seat by my side, and then almost flaunt in my face one of those disgusting pictorial sheets that are such ready agents of Satan. I left my seat and took a chair by the stove, wondering to myself if men—and for that matter, some women—loved to read about the deeds of the good and virtuous, as they do about the wicked and depraved.

I was roused from my reverie by hearing something sizzle on the stove. I couldn't think what it was at first, but was not kept in ignorance long. It was tobacco-jute, which some being was expectorating on the hot stove! If men must expectorate, why can't they do so into the receptacles prepared for that purpose? Don't they imagine we women have any delicate stomachs? I almost wished that the man was obliged to swallow his own tobacco, and not disgust me with it. As misery loves company, I wished that some female would come in and help me bear the trials put upon me, but none were so foolish as to venture out.

I tried to be resigned, and I do believe I should have been so had not four more men dropped in, smoking villainous clay pipes in chorus. To inhale smoke was enough punishment for all the sins I had committed. At one time I thought I should faint, and went onto the front platform for a breath of fresh air.

The cold wind and flying snow drove me back again, and I put down the author of "Beautiful Snow" as an unmitigated humbug, or one who hadn't seen it under the circumstances I have described.

When I returned, I inwardly prayed for patience—sure enough I needed it. I sat like a stone, looking out of the window. For these men and their tobacco there was no mercy in my heart. They little thought the vengeance I was plotting at that window—how I should expose them in this essay!

The depot-master handed me a small book to read. I opened it with some peevishness for his trouble. It was a waste of the candy, for the book was not worth it. It was a medical almanac!

Ugh! I thought this would be a dreary world if we had to subsist on such literature as that, altogether. What romance can you find in the remarkable cure of neuralgia or the mumps? And what preposterous pictures, too! An angel coming straight from heaven—almost implying that patent medicines were manufactured there—and at a mere sight of the bottle, before even the cork was withdrawn, the "young blood" was restored to the use of limbs. That beats all the sensation stories I ever read in the old Boston Stunner.

Would the cars ever come? How could I eat my luncheon with those men staring at me? I should have had to inhale a pound of smoke with every biscuit I endeavored to swallow.

The cars did come at last; and, hungry, tired, and disgusted with railway stations and tobacco, I got into the cars, fully resolved to write out a new book of Martyrs, placing as the first name in the catalogue that of

EVE LAWLESS.

MY GYMNASTICS.

I HAVE got gymnastics very bad now. Professor Haudspring says it is the worst case of gymnastics he has ever known. I work hard every afternoon and try my best to follow his directions. I read somewhere that when weary with one kind of exercise a person should change it for another. Climbing the ladder one day with my hands, I got tired when near the top, and let go so as to try something else. Falling twenty

feet or so, and striking in a sitting position, made me determine hereafter never to attempt that again. My appetite wasn't good for several days thereafter.

I am progressing finely in the art of jumping. I would never set up my claim, however, as a champion jumper, for fear some one might come along and jump my claim.

I attempted to throw a somersault the other day. I threw half of one and then stuck fast, when a friend very kindly stepped forward and threw the other half for me. It is hard on the neck when you only throw half a somersault. It was well some one was by to take the job off my hands, or I might never have gone over it.

The gymnasts in the circus who perform on the horizontal bars have always challenged my admiration, and I have greatly envied them their feats of mingled strength and agility. Whether they hung by their toes, swung by their eyebrows, held themselves straight out in the air by their little finger, or revolved around the bar, swift as a grindstone handle in haying time, the man on the horizontal bar has never failed to excite my warmest enthusiasm. I secretly determined when I joined the gymnasts to add the horizontal bar to my accomplishments at the earliest possible moment. So I hurried through the minor apparatus to get at the bar.

I partook sparingly of the dumb-bells; dined lightly off the clubs, and merely tasted the weights and pulleys, so great was my impatience to begin practice.

One fatal morning I found myself the sole occupant of the gymnasium. I wanted no one to witness my first efforts at the bar (any more than a young drinker does) and here was the coveted moment.

I first thought I would try revolving rapidly around the bar, with a grand finale in which I would stand on my head on the bar, and then throw a double back somersault to the floor. Rejecting that as rather too difficult a feat for a first attempt, I concluded to undertake the simple feat of hanging by the legs to begin with. Found it the easiest thing in the world.

Remember wondering why people don't try it oftener, instead of hanging by the neck, it is so much pleasanter. Regretted so much of my life had been spent without learning to hang by my legs.

Hung there long enough to get the hang of it, as you might say, and then tried to get back again. No go! I had seen how gymnasts got there, head down, but had neglected to observe how they regained their "as you were," as we say in military. I tried to wriggle around so as to get hold of the bar with my hand, but found I couldn't wriggle to any effect whatsoever. I had a faint impression that circus fellows let go with their legs, and came down on their feet, but I felt morally certain if I let go I should come down on my head and not about, all the rest of my life, with my neck in two pieces. Things were getting serious.

The blood, taking what I consider, an undue advantage of my position, was all running down into my head. The whole room was swimming. Dumb-bells were waltzing madly with the clubs, and inverted apparatuses of all descriptions went whirling around in the most bewildering manner. I felt my strength giving way, and, although there was a rule against loud talking, I yelled for succor; but there was no succor there, except myself. As I felt myself going, I faintly aware, which I would advise my readers to do when they can't get away in any other manner. When I recovered I was stretched on a spring-board and a couple of gymnasts (who arrived opportunely) were fanning me with a glass of brandy and water.

The fall raised such a bump on my head that I looked like a double-header. I was puzzled for several days to tell which was me and which was the bump. Used to get the bunch slumped, and wear my hat on it.

I recovered from that, and am now taking my exercise every day. I am so muscular in my arms that I can bring myself up by hand. Before I went to the gymnasium I couldn't bring up a child—not in the way he should go. I have practiced holding out weights until I can hold out almost any thing.

It is a good thing to be able to hold out. Many men of temperance men were helped by their reform, they could only hold out. I am deficient in bar practice. Parallel bars confuse me, for where there are two bars parallel to each other, all things being equal, I am puzzled to think which to patronize.

In conclusion I may say gymnastics are a good thing. They bring age back to the spring-time of life, and teach youth the "ropes." Clubs are always trumps, dumb-bells are profitable and entertaining companions, even though they be deaf and dumb, and the best representation of the Athenian character. Aristophanes was a contemporary with Euripides and Sophocles. When the Athenians suffered themselves to be governed by men who had no other view than to make themselves masters of the commonwealth, Aristophanes exposed their artifices with great wit and severity upon the stage. Cleo was the first whom he attacked in his comedy of the *Equites*; and when none of the comedians would venture to personate a man of his great authority, Aristophanes acted the character himself with so much success, that the Athenians obliged Cleo to pay a fine of five talents, which were given to the poet. The people were besides so well pleased with the satirist, that they cast handfuls of flowers upon his head, and carried him through the city in triumph, with loud acclamations. They made also a public decree, that he should be honored with a crown of the sacred olive tree on the citadel, which was the greatest honor that could be paid to a citizen.

The *Clouds*, which Aristophanes composed in ridicule of Socrates, is the most celebrated of all his comedies. Socrates had a contempt for the comic poets, and never went to see their plays, except when Alcibiades or Oritas obliged him to go thither. As he was a man of piety, probity, candor and wisdom, he could not bear that the characters of his fellow-citizens should be insulted and abused. This contempt which he expressed of the comic poets, was the ground of their aversion to him, and the motive of Aristophanes' writing the *Clouds* against him. Madame Ducier tells us she was so much charmed with his performance, that after she had translated it, and read it over two hundred times, it did not become tedious; and that the pleasure she received from it was so exquisite, as to make her forget all the contempt and indignation which Aristophanes deserved, for employing his wit to ruin a man who was wisdom itself, and the greatest ornament in the city of Athens.

Foolsap Papers.

Compound Refractory Telescope.

The Compound Refractory Telescope lately perfected by the scientific German doctor, Limburger, is the best thing for a man to see through, besides a millstone, that was ever invented. It is one hundred and forty-eight feet long—a little unhandy for a pocket-telescope—and the doctor intends to use it during meantimes for a ten-pin alley, and will have a bar in one end of it. On the day of its completion he invited me to come and help him take observations—we took something convenient which he had first, as it strengthens the eye, as the doctor himself affirmed.

The telescope was turned upon some hills fourteen miles down the coast. Looking through it, I saw a drove of the largest and most horrible-looking beasts that were ever seen outside of a case of delirium tremens, coming over the brow of the hill. I started back with a shriek, and when the doctor looked through at them, his hair rose up on tips, and he turned to leave the country; but, hearing the bottle jingle against the glass (his hands were shaking so), he turned round again, and we both nervously set up to venture another look, when we found them to be only a magnified drove of little red ants. The doctor's hand was quite steady when he poured out the next glass.

By an oversight, the doctor left out a lens which should have been in the middle of the telescope; the consequence was that all objects were reversed. We brought it to bear on a man twenty-four miles away, and a very great disaster happened; it

turned the man upside down, and as we thoughtlessly allowed him to remain too long in that position, all his blood rushed to his head, and he died.

We then directed it out across the Atlantic, and were surprised to see the shores of England very distinctly. I could see two fellows playing cards. One of them had just put down a counterfeit five-pound note, well executed, to cover the other's, which I could see was genuine. No. 1 had five aces in his hand, with all the chances in his favor. It was a sad sight!

Just then the doctor happened to espy a man coming up the road who had threatened to kick him. He approached nearer and nearer, shaking his fist at the doctor, who was dreadfully frightened.

"Bear a hand here," said I, and we turned the small end of the telescope toward the irate fellow, and he received a basket into the country a distance of forty-five miles, so there was but little chance for him to get back again that day; he was completely out of sight.

Such great things are performed by the application of science! The doctor's joy was unspeakable; he tried to articulate, but his joy was too much. He laid down on a briar-bush and went to sleep.

The mail train from the interior was three hours behind time. I got the telescope to bear upon it, forty-two miles away, and brought it up so suddenly that the passengers didn't know any thing about it.

I had a coat which a tailor had lately made for me, but as he was obliged, as he said, to cut it according to the cloth, it was too small for me by the matter of a mile and a half. I went off about a hundred yards and hung it on a tree, then came back and turned the telescope on it, but I turned it forever; the telescope made it large enough for a circus-tent. I had it cut up and made into small coats, and started a clothing store.

This telescope is the finest thing you ever saw, without doubt, for hunting needles in haystacks; for bringing up children when they stray away from the fold; or for seeing the point of a joke.

The sky was clear—clearer than coffee cleared with an egg—the day on which we made these observations, and I turned the telescope oppositely from the front and looked back clear into the year 1492. I saw the frail bark that contained Columbus and his trunk, come sailing toward the shores of this continent. I saw his eye brighten as he heard the cry of "Land, ho!" (since superseded by the cry of "hoe land"), and I saw him turn round and heard him say:

"Put in a barrel of tar and a little rosin, boys, and we'll reach land before night; I should like to see George Franciscain before supper!"

I adjusted the instrument to a nicer point, and saw the aborigine on shore put their eye-glasses to their eyes, and heard them say: "There comes the Great Eastern; wonder if she's got the Atlantic cable aboard?"

I turned the telescope still further back, and saw Cleopatra sewing with her celebrated needle, and Pompey sleeping on his renowned pillar.

I turned it forward and looked with a good deal of curiosity into the middle of next week, and further on into the dim vistas of future time.

I saw a celebrated New Zealander hunting amid the ruins of St. Paul's, in London, for a stray penny to get the next drink with.

I saw the archeologist of the Chinese emperor, Fee Fum, digging upon Manhattan Island to see if it was true that there had once been a city there. He didn't seem to have taken his tea very straight, for, in stumbling over early records, he stumbled over every thing else that lay in his way, with the most congressional abandon. The scene was too sad, and I looked skyward and could plainly see down the chimneys on the planet, Mars.

The people walked around asleep and laid awake; they ate water and drank nothing stronger than bread and—and—I don't remember any thing else.

When I came to, I was lying in my own bed, and people were standing around; and I heard the doctor say: "Poor fellow, he took a little too much," but I couldn't imagine what it was that I had taken a little too much of, and when I had found voice enough to ask him what he meant, he only smiled. Now, what did he smile for? That's what I want to know. I don't like to be fooled with. Yours, questioningly,

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Short Stories from History.

Origin of the Drama.—When Dionysius, King of Syracuse, desired to learn the state and language of Athens, Plato sent him the plays of Aristophanes, telling him, in these words: "The best representation of the Athenian character. Aristophanes was a contemporary with Euripides and Sophocles. When the Athenians suffered themselves to be governed by men who had no other view than to make themselves masters of the commonwealth, Aristophanes exposed their artifices with great wit and severity upon the stage. Cleo was the first whom he attacked in his comedy of the *Equites*; and when none of the comedians would venture to personate a man of his great authority, Aristophanes acted the character himself with so much success, that the Athenians obliged Cleo to pay a fine of five talents, which were given to the poet. The people were besides so well pleased with the satirist, that they cast handfuls of flowers upon his head, and carried him through the city in triumph, with loud acclamations. They made also a public decree, that he should be honored with a crown of the sacred olive tree on the citadel, which was the greatest honor that could be paid to a citizen."

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CATHOLIC. The whole number of Popes, from St. Peter to Pius IX., is 257. Of these, 82 are venerated as saints, 88 having been married, 104 being Romans, and 103 natives of other parts of Italy; 15 Frenchmen, 9 Greeks, 7 Germans, 5 Asiatic, 3 Africans, 3 Spaniards, 2 Sicilians, 1 Portuguese, 1 Italian, 1 Dutchman, 1 Portuguese, 1 Canadian, 1 Englishman. Only five have occupied the Pontifical chair over 23 years. These are St. Peter, Sylvester I., Hadrian I., Pius VI., and Pius IX.

ANIMAL. There is no reason why children should not drink tea. It should, however, be diluted with plenty of milk. Green is not the best for children, and, indeed, for any one who grows up, is good. Tea and Japan teas are regarded as the purest and most harmless.

MOTHER. A mother wishing to do her duty to her daughters, should take heed that the notions they imbibe, and with which they grow up, are good. There are many persons ready to fill their young heads with false ideas. It is a wrong view to imagine that a person miles compelled by poverty is out of place if engaged in household duties. Mothers must, therefore, if they wish their daughters to become good, happy, and rational women, see that this part of their education is not neglected or looked upon with contempt.

STUDENT. The most ancient M.S. are written without accents, stops, or separation between words; nor was it until the nineteenth century that copyists began to leave spaces between the words.

POVERTY. To make your old black dress appear new and glossy, wash it as you would other goods, adding only a little turpentine.

HENRY C. The cheapest and best way of ventilating a bedroom, is to hang a sheet of fine gauze or rated zinc substituted for a pane of glass in one of the upper squares of the window.

FASHION. The Alsatian bow is the latest novelty of the day in trimming, and is used on dresses, cloaks, and bouffants.

SCHOOLBOY. Almonds are of very ancient date. The word is derived from the Arabic words, *al* and *manah*, meaning, to count.

CARRIE BAKER. A good way to make duck or goose hash is to cut an onion into small square pieces, put into a stew-pan with a bit of butter, fry it, but do not let it brown; put as much water into the stew-pan as will make sauce for the hash; thicken it with a little flour; cut up the duck or goose, and put it into the sauce; warm it, do not let it boil; season it with pepper, salt and ketchup.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit of matter, and secondly upon neatness of MS. as to copy, clear, length, &c. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note-size paper as most convenient to editor and compiler, bearing in mind that each page is to be carefully proofed. (It is for the purpose of each page.) A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their editorial early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We can not use "Irene's Sacrifice," "It Might Have Been," "Independence," "Love," "Emma's Victory," "Ben Thompson's Dead Trail," "A Life for a Love," "Besy Brent's Doctor," "A Good Time Going," "A Long Look Behind," "A Dime Story," "Aldronado's Job," "Keep Me from Harm," "The Old Astronomer's Broken Lens," "The Boy Missionary," "Not To-night," "Wat Tye," "Do Not Let the Manger of the Law Turn Desert Friend," "An Arab Dinner," "My Friend, the Gout."

We have placed on file for use the following: "The Harpener's Death," "Life for a Blow," "The Mast-head Tragedy," "Under the Lips," "The Maid of the Lagoon," "The Wrong Man," "The Forecastleman's Revenge," "Home in the Debt," "Jack Tar's Story," "Nitty Nitty Nine," "Diamonds or Hearts," "Mrs. Leslie's Stepmother."

C. C. G. The artist named has gone to Rome for a year.

ELLA C. S. Write us more fully. We do not "see the point."

POND LILY. Bailey's "Feet" is by no means obscure in meaning. He tells the story of Festus and Lucius as plainly as possible. A traveling style, with "stunning" patterns of goods and streamers.—Write to any good engraver for his terms of apprenticeship. It is a trade only learned by great patience. It pays only for first-class workmen.

CONSTANT READER (No. 2). Mr. Greeley is not an "educated" man. What he knows about every thing under the sun he has learned chiefly out of newspapers and close observation. His advice to young men is generally good, but when he deprecates a collegiate training and education he is talking about that which he positively knows nothing.

X. Y. Z. All real book manuscripts pass the mail at "book" rates, viz.: 2 cents for every four ounces or fraction thereof. A dime novel, we suppose, a book under the name of a novel, is not a novel, "Heart of Fire," commenced in No. 30 and ended in No. 42. Its price, therefore, is 65 cents.

E. F. T. Judging by the MS. submitted you are not qualified to write successfully. A traveling style, with "stunning" patterns of goods and streamers.—Write to any good engraver for his terms of apprenticeship. It is a trade only learned by great patience. It pays only for first-class workmen.

SILKEN THOMAS. Use the borax; it is harmless and efficient. Or powdered charcoal is good; or orris paste; or Old Brown Windsor Soap—all are good to clear the skin of discolorations or deposits. Never use a very harsh brush.

EAST BIRMINGHAM. Aggie Penne is still writing for us. Capt. Adams will soon reappear in his splendid romance "Lichtington." A traveling style, with "stunning" patterns of goods and streamers.—Write to any good engraver for his terms of apprenticeship. It is a trade only learned by great patience. It pays only for first-class workmen.

NED HAZEL. We have several times recently answered the question (1). Of the several hair dyes it is hard to say which is best or rather worst—for in any dye is unwholesome and unwholesome. See Dime Etiquette for rules for Introductions.

PERRY HOLMES. Yes, Olive Logan has written a book condemning Free Love and Free Divorce in no sparing terms. It is especially pungent and suggestive, and will create an immense sensation. It will issue in June.

BETTER S. F. The price of passage to Europe varies according to the accommodations desired, and the line of steamers chosen—say from \$30 currency to \$120 gold. Five dollars per day is a moderate allowance for expenses on the continent, but is enough, if economy is observed. A traveling style, with "stunning" patterns of goods and streamers.—Write to any good engraver for his terms of apprenticeship. It is a trade only learned by great patience. It pays only for first-class

WEARY.

BY ST. KIMO.

Ye tales that lie beneath the Southern seas,
Basking beneath the sunlight's mellow glare,
Your pearls and shells are crossed by many a breeze,
A gem surrounded by the waves as fair.
Ye not so fair as she, the captive maid,
Who musing stands beside the dripping food,
Watching the crimson-tinted waltz fade,
That erst had left behind their trail of blood.

The marble moon with white and glittering rays,
Smiles coldly down upon the slumbering waves,
Whose silver surface meets the level breeze,
Thrown from the stars so silent, still and grave.
But, ah, the light that flashes from the West,
Can ill compare with all that beauty gave,
The blue-eyed maid, within whose heaving breast
The rosy beams of passion softly lave.

'Mid the soft laughter of that April day,
The weary night came flitting slowly down,
And soon, once more the shadows dim and gray,
Were playing softly o'er the mountains brown.
And she, whose spirit kissed the crystal sea,
Was wafted out beyond the pale white stars,
While the weird notes that rang across the sea,
Stole softly downward from the heavenly bars.

Cora's Failure.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"Oh, dear!" she said, "I have done it all!
It was uttered in the most melancholic
of voices, and accompanied by such a lu-
gubrious sigh that Mrs. Chesterton glanced
up from her sewing to the pretty, clouded
face at the other window.

"And what is the matter, child? You
look as though you hadn't a friend in the
world. Is anything wrong, dear?"

Then Cora Chesterton's face—a rarely
beautiful face it was, cherry-lipped and
hazel-eyed—was turned to her mother's in-
quiring gaze.

"Wrong! mamma, every thing's wrong!
Show me the first glimpse of sunshine in
this horrid, tedious life you and I lead, and
I'll be eternally grateful."

A grievous look flitted across Mrs. Ches-
terton's face; a face that bore traces of re-
cent and great sorrows.

"I am sorry, dear, that you can find no
sweetness in the cup you are obliged to
drink. Life and health are, to me, very
great blessings, and I appreciate them the
more, I think, since your father's death. What
were you going to say, Cora?"

For Mrs. Chesterton had seen the lips
move as if to frame an answer; perhaps
she was somewhat surprised when the words
came.

"I was going to say I fear I shall die of
the blues; there is no change in this hor-
rible dullness. Just fancy, mamma, how
strange it must be for me to give no parties,
and entertain so few guests! Oh! if
papa had only left us as we expected!"

And Cora frowned, almost angrily.
"Child—child!" and gentle as was the
repeated word, Mrs. Chesterton conveyed
grave reproach in it. Then, with a sort
of patient sadness, went on:

"What is there in particular you are
thinking of? If I can relieve this tedious
I will do it, in any way you may suggest."

A bright smile suddenly radiated Cora's
face that made her look prettier than ever;
and she started from her chair in an im-
pulse of glad delight.

"Mamma! if you only will! Oh, if I
only could have a party, and wear my white
grenadine!"

A little exclamation of surprise from
Mrs. Chesterton preceded her answer.

"A party, Cora? Why, you know I
could not think of affording such an ex-
travagance. It would take at least a hun-
dred dollars, and I could not spare that
from our little hoard. Besides, dear, surely
you are not enough acquainted—"

"Oh, yes I am, mamma. There are at
least fifty people I could name who I'm
sure would come."

"Rob Fenton, for instance," said Mrs.
Chesterton, archly, glancing across the
room.

Cora's cheeks flamed, and she tossed her
head in a pretty, graceful way she had.

"Rob Fenton! indeed, I don't see why
you should twist me about him, mamma.
I've told you and him too, over and over
again, that I will not have him for a lover.
He's poor, and I've had enough of poverty
since poor papa died."

Mrs. Chesterton sighed faintly at Cora's
words, and glanced around the cozy room
in which they sat, as if wondering if Cora
called that poverty.

"The truth is, mamma—"

"And Cora's
coaxing, sweet-toned voice dispelled the
reverie she was falling into—"the truth is,
mamma, I—I—think if I try, I might—pos-
sibly—win—I mean that Mr. Delmayne acts
as though—as if—"

And she blushed and broke down en-
tirely.

Mrs. Chesterton had caught the name,
Delmayne; was it possible that the rich,
aristocratic young gentleman, the most el-
igible match far or near, was in love with
her Cora?

Her heart bounded almost as wildly as
her daughter's, at the thought. It would be
so grand to have Cora do so well; then
there were the Delmayne diamonds, the
Delmayne plate, the Delmayne—

"So you see, mamma dear, it might be
a stroke of policy if I gave such a party. Be-
sides, I am so crazy for the opportunity it
would offer me to completely snub that
Lillian Maxwell—the haughty creature!"

Mrs. Chesterton had heard only part of
Cora's remark, but that little convinced her
of Cora's sagacity. Of course it would be
a stroke of policy; who knew but what the
Delmayne alliance hung on her faltering
decision?

"Do say yes, mamma, and promise me
a new dress, won't you? Mr. Delmayne
might notice how shabby my grenadine is.
He is such a connoisseur."

And Mrs. Chesterton said "yes" and
promised the new dress.

In the middle of the parlor she stood,
looking very radiant as the bright glare of
the gaslight fell athwart her pretty face,
lighting up her eager eyes into a new
beauty, and, most of all, showing all the
fine points of her "new dress."

Surely, Mr. Delmayne could find no fault
with this; surely, if she had read admira-
tion in his ardent eyes when she had met
him in her ordinary attire, under ordinary
circumstances, she was not wrong in think-
ing she could bring him to her feet, aided
by the important adjunct of a stylish,
becoming toilette.

And so Cora Chesterton let her thoughts
fly on, as she scanned carefully her pale-
pink crepe, with its graceful train, its
stylish overskirt, its faultless en Pompadour
waist.

Yes; to-night was the night of the party

—and her triumph, she felt almost sure.
And how thoroughly she intended to play
her cards well; how thoroughly she de-
spised the comparatively humble life she
led; and, more than all, over and above all,
what a perfect man Lester Delmayne was!

Could she love him? Ah, didn't she love
him, and his money, his position, his
beauty?

Surely, she might win him; surely, she
could win him, and her heart bounded at
the lofty flight her wild-winged imagina-
tion took.

Just then the door-bell rung, and in a flut-
ter of nervous delight, Cora heard a gentle-
man's voice at the door.

"Would she step down a moment before
the guests assembled? Mr. Fenton wished
to—"

Mr. Fenton, indeed! and why should he
desire an interview? Oh, yes, she would go
down of course; but he was such a bore.

And so she sailed down into the room
where he awaited; this plain-faced, grand-
hearted man who made the greatest mis-
take—perhaps the only one—in his life, in
lavishing his love on a girl so ambitious as
Cora Chesterton.

To-night he had only been invited be-
cause Mrs. Chesterton insisted upon it—he
had come to see if there was a chance for
him with Cora; and now, as he sat there,
he heard Cora's light, rustling tread through
the hall; and then he heard some one enter
and accost her.

Cora's greeting—"Oh, Mr. Delmayne!"
was so rapturous, and the gentleman's re-
ply was nearly as ardent.

"I had something so very important to
say to you, Miss Cora. May I see Mrs. Ches-
terton while I wait for you? I under-
stand you are engaged for a few minutes."

That was all Rob Fenton heard; then, all
flushed and unusually gracious, the beau-
tiful girl came into the room.

He went at once to meet her as she crossed
the carpet.

"I need not detain you but a moment;
I only have a word to say, and a word will
answer me. I am not given to—flowery
speeches, but I came to give you my love,
Cora—and ask you, yes, pray you, to accept
it. Cora, do you?"

He was not so plain as she thought, with
that quiet eloquence in his eyes, that splen-
did dignity in his manner.

For a moment—only one moment, Cora
wondered if it would not be better—pshaw!
this, against the Delmayne money, the Del-
mayne grandeur? And was there not more
than a chance that it was already elected to
her? What had Lester Delmayne meant
that he wanted of her? why had he such a
favor to crave of her mother?

Then she bowed, very politely, very cold-
ly.

"I feel deeply honored, Mr. Fenton, at
being your choice among so many far su-
perior to me. But I can not accept your
offer."

Mr. Fenton's eyes dimmed for a second;
then he bowed as gravely as she had done.

"Then I will not detain you longer.
Good-night."

And now, Miss Cora!

Lester Delmayne came in just as the hall-
door closed on Mr. Fenton, and he saw
Cora, flushed and pretty, awaiting him from
the little sofa beside the grate.

"I thought I would drop in a moment
before the other guests arrived, as I wanted
to speak to you on a very important point,
and gain your consent to what I shall ask."

Cora's heart was beating fearfully; al-
ready he had said enough to enlighten the
most unobscured. She smiled and flushed
still deeper, and toyed nervously with her
handkerchief.

"Your mother has given her consent most
kindly; so now all that remains is for you
to say 'yes,' when I beg of you to grant me
the favor of acting as first bridesmaid at my
wedding—mine and Miss Lillian Maxwell's.
Will you?"

But the room was darkening, whirling
around her.

She remembered murmuring a few indistinct
words of acceptance; of hearing him
thank her cordially, and then she was in
her own room, weeping the bitterest tears
she had ever shed.

If she only had been less ambitious; only
been content with the good the gods gave
her—the love of honest Rob Fenton! but
now he was gone, lost to her, and that other
never cared for her!

And so Cora learned her lesson; so she
tried, and so she failed, as many another,
not content with seeing others fail, will fail
themselves in the race for happiness.

Without Mercy:

OR,
THREADS OF PURE GOLD.

A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS.
BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL.
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD,"
"LAURA'S PERIL," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.
IN THE STREETS.

WHEN Hester Corwin stepped off the
staging of the Eclipse, at New Orleans, on
the morning following her departure from
Holcombe Hall, she began to realize the
desperate nature of the step she had taken.

The tumult of the bustling levee frightened
her; the roiling multitudes filled her with
a fear that she could not define; and now
she began to think that she had not acted
wisely in leaving her home, and that, pos-
sibly, the best thing she could do would be
to return to it at once.

While she was pondering on what course
to pursue, and endeavoring to elbow her
way out of the throng, a burly hackman
approached and said, in a familiar way:

"Hotel, Miss—any hotel or private house
in the city?"

Yes, she did want to go to a hotel, or
a boarding-house, or somewhere, but had a
preference, stipulating only that it should
be respectable.

"I know just the very place you want,"
replied the hackman—"a nice hotel on
Gravier street, kept by a particular friend
of mine."

"Is it a nice place—a real nice place?"
asked Hester, hesitatingly.

"No nicer in the whole State of Louisi-
ana. Come on, Miss. Here's the cab.
Jump in, please, and I'll take you to the
Place in a jiffy."

She did as he requested, and then the
driver mounted his perch, cracked his long
whip, shouted to the crowd to make way
for him, and the vehicle rattled over the
rough planks and into Canal street.

All this time, as she felt herself being
whirled away, her mind was full of vague
misgivings lest the hackman should not
keep faith with her, and, instead of bring-
ing her to a respectable hotel, usher her in
to a low den such as she had read of fre-
quently in the newspapers that occasion-
ally fell into her hands while at school.

A rapid drive of twenty minutes, and the
hackman stopped before a large ugly build-
ing on Burgundy street. Dismounting, and
helping Hester to alight, he said: "This is
the place."

She glanced up at the basket-like bal-
cony that hung overhead, and which was
filled with drying clothes; at the red mus-
lin curtains that shrouded the lower win-
dows, and then, turning to the hackman,
she said:

"Oh, sir, I don't want to stay here. I
don't like this place."

"I can't help that," he said, gruffly. "I
haven't time to drive you all over town."

"But, sir," and she took out a well-filled
pocket-book, "I will pay you for your trou-
ble."

"Oh, then, that alters the case consider-
ably," he remarked, eying the money; "you
see, I'm a poor orphan, and I can't
afford to lose my time, and I most always
gets paid in advance."

Hester was really afraid of the man; he
was so coarse and brutal in appearance,
and so she thought it prudent to ask him
how much money he wanted.

"Ten dollars," he replied.

"Ten dollars?" she echoed. "Why, I
didn't think it would be so much as that."

"Some people are unreasonable," he
said; "they have an idea that horses can
be fed on paving-stones, and that men what
drives cabs are kept by the city treasurer."

While he was indulging in this bit of sar-
casm, Hester was selecting two five-dollar
bills with which to pay him. One was rag-
ged and much worn, and the girl asked:

"Will you take this one?"

"Yes," he exclaimed, "I'll take that,
and more too!" and with this, he snatched
the pocket-book out of her hand, and was
about to leap on his box, when he was
dealt a severe blow across the knuckles by
a heavy walking-stick, which caused him
not only to drop his prize, but to utter a
loud cry of pain, and a man's voice close
behind Hester said: "You can take that,
too, while you are about it."

The girl turned quickly, and was face to
face with Rupert Gaspard!

Scarcely knowing what she was doing,
Hester rushed into the outstretched arms as
into a refuge, with tears of gratitude in her
eyes at this opportune deliverance. He
folded her to his bosom for an instant
only, and then, turning to the hackman,
who was now confronting him, he said:

"You had better move on, or I will have
to turn you over to the police for attempt-
ing to rob this young lady."

"Let her pay me for the ride first," re-
plied the Jehu, meekly. "I earned that."

"You have earned a great deal more, my
fine fellow—a term at Baton Rouge—and
you may learn yourself exceedingly for-
tunate that you have fallen into such mer-
ciful hands."

"Then you don't intend to pay me?"

"Not a penny," answered Rupert, re-
turning to Hester her pocket-book, which
he had picked up from the pavement.

"And now, Miss Corwin, let us go," he
added, extending his arm.

The young couple walked quickly away
from the scene, while the hackman, mutter-
ing about that he had been deceived, and
about the girl's ingratitude, drove off in
an opposite direction.

Of course Rupert was very much as-
tonished at finding Hester in such a place,
and when they had gone a square or two,
he told her so frankly.

She was just as frank with him, relating
every circumstance that had transpired at
Holcombe Hall having any bearing upon
the cause of her departure therefrom.

"And what do you propose doing?" he
asked, when she had finished.

"Indeed, I don't know. I'm so discour-
aged that I've a great notion to return to
my prison-house again. This big city really
appears like a huge giant destined to crush
every bit of hope, and youth, and even life,
out of those who come to it unprotected."

A silence fell upon the twain, broken at
last by Rupert saying in his quick, impetuous
way, and with a great deal of earnestness:

"Miss Corwin, although the duration of
our acquaintanceship does not entitle me,
perhaps, to the name of your friend, yet, be-
lieve me when I say, as I do now, that I
would gladly do anything in my power to
serve you."

She thanked him with tears in her eyes,
and he continued:

"Fate has enabled me to rescue you from
the clutches of a scoundrel; will you per-
mit me to supplement the kindness of fate,
by providing you with a home during your
stay in the city?"

"But, Mr. Gaspard, I've got money; I
can go to a hotel," she interrupted.

"There is one serious objection to your
going to a hotel," he said, "and that is: this
your uncle Harold will, in all probability,
visit New Orleans in quest of you, and, of
course, he will naturally search the hotels
first. Don't you think so?"

Yes, she thought so; but might he not
find her out any where? "Besides," Hester
added, "I must find employment; my money
will not last long, you know."

"What do you propose doing?"

"Oh, dear me! I never thought about
that," she replied. "But I can teach."

"Music, or painting, or French; and I
think, although I never tried, I could teach
children to read and write, if I could get
any thing else to do."

"Those are brave words, Miss Hester,"
said Rupert, "and speak well for your cour-
age; but, teaching, in whatever branch, is a
toilsome, ill-remunerated, vexatious pur-
suit, and I'm afraid you would soon break
down under it."

"But I must do something," she said, de-
terminedly. "And I can't do any thing
else."

"Then if you have chosen your calling
already, and have quite made up your mind
not to go back to Holcombe Hall, I will do
all I can to assist you. As to where you
will stop while in the city, I would suggest
your coming to my aunt Montele's, on
St. Charles street. She will receive you
kindly, I'm sure, and perhaps aid you in se-
curing a position such as you desire."

Hester hesitated; she would much rather
not intrude herself on the privacy of a fam-
ily to whom she was an entire stranger, and
so she said:

"I'm much obliged for your kindly offer,
indeed; but I would rather go to a hotel
until you have consulted your aunt, at
least."

He consented to this, and Rupert, hailing
a cab, they were soon deposited in front of
the St. Charles Hotel—then a new struc-
ture.

They went in by a private door, and an
obsequious servant showed Hester her room,
at the threshold of which Rupert bade her
adieu, promising to return in a few hours.

He was as good as his word—may, better—
for with him he brought Mrs. Montele, his
aunt, a dark, elderly lady, who after a for-
mal introduction to Hester, said:

"Dear Rupert has told me all, every
thing; of your lonely life; of your treat-
ment by your uncle, and of your brave
fight. And now I have come to offer you
a home until such times as you choose to
seek another."

Hester tried to thank her, but the words
would not come fast enough, and she cried
instead—cried glad, tender tears, that
brought a dimness into Jean Montele's eyes
as well, as she pressed the girl to her heart
and whispered soothing words into her ear.

Hester Corwin felt happier than she had
for many a day when she entered Mrs. Mon-
tele's splendid mansion an hour after, and
was welcomed to her new home by little
Lotta Montele, a child of eight years, and
Mrs. Montele's only one, her husband hav-
ing died in the Indies six months before
Lotta's birth.

"I'm so glad you've come," said Lotta,
catching Hester's hand, "because we can
play together, and sing in the evening, and
you can sit in our pew on Sundays with
mamma and finally Rupert. Can't you?"

Yes, with a blush, as Rupert's name was
mentioned; she could do all these things,
and what was more, would do all these
things with the greatest pleasure, and so
Hester Corwin began a new life.

CHAPTER XIV.

BYRON SKITTLES, ESQ.

The lights of the Crescent City were
glimmering through the fog and mist, and
the darkness of night was settling over all,
when Harold Holcombe, standing on the
boiler deck of the steamer, thought he saw
a familiar figure on the shore.

"That looks like Madge," he said. "But,
how could she have arrived here in advance
of me?"

As the boat neared the shore, the woman
who had attracted Harold's attention moved
off toward the foot of Natchez alley, at the
mouth of which she stood until the old man
had approached within a dozen yards of
her.

Then, turning quickly, she plunged into
the gloom of the narrow alleyway, and al-
though Harold called after her, she did not
stop nor answer.

"That's that crazy she-devil, Madge," ex-
claimed Harold, "and I presume she is here
on one of her witch's errands, or else she
means mischief. If I could only get her to
co-operate with me, we would soon find the
girl; but, no, she won't do any thing but
rave about her dead sister, and threaten me.
I guess I'll have to kill her yet, in self-de-
fense."

He ground his teeth with rage as he spoke,
and hurried up Natchez alley, past the old
theater on Magazine street—which is now
an auction room—and down Gravier to the
St. Charles Hotel.

After registering his name and being
shown to his room, he sat down and wrote
an advertisement, offering a reward of one
hundred dollars that would lead to the dis-
covery of his niece, Hester Corwin, who, in
the words of the advertisement, "had de-
serted her home, in the Parish of St. James,
at the suggestion of a young man named
Tracy Culbert, and was now in New Or-
leans."

This done, he dispatched one of the ser-
vants to the Picayune office with it, and
being too nervous to sit longer in the quiet
room, he donned his hat and spent the next
hour in walking aimlessly about the damp
streets, scanning the faces of every passer-
by, and finally bringing up in Lafayette
Square, where he seated himself on one of
the rustic benches and gave way to bitter
reflections.

He was interrupted in this by a small,
wiry, peak-nosed individual, with a large
hat and an immense umbrella, who, tapping
Harold on the shoulder, said, familiarly:

"Good-evening, sir. Have I the pleasure
of addressing Mr. Harold Holcombe, of St.
James Parish?"

Shaking off the hand which still rested
on his shoulder, the latter said, rising as he
spoke: "I am that gentleman."

"Ah! So I thought," replied the little
man. "I'm not often mistaken; no, sir,
rarely, very rarely."

"But may I ask, what is—"

"Oh, certainly," interrupted the stranger;
"you may ask what you please; no one
could attempt to do so foolish a thing as to
prevent a man from asking as many ques-
tions as he, in his wisdom, may see fit; but
I would, at the same time, call your atten-
tion to another fact, and that is, that there
is no power to compel me to answer only
such queries as I deem proper."

Harold was becoming hot and excited
now, and turning on the little man, he
said: "You talk like a fool, sir."

Not in the least disconcerted, the other
replied: "Don't you act like one. As for
me, I can afford to talk; it is my business,
but, discretion is what you want, my dear
sir—discretion."

"Do you know who are talking to?" de-
manded Harold, now beside himself with
rage.

"Perfectly; I am addressing Mr. Hol-
combe, proprietor of Holcombe Hall, and,
if my client knows what she is talking
about, and I haven't the slightest doubt
but what she does—I have the pleasure of
addressing the gentleman who, on a dark
night, seventeen years ago, cast a woman
named Gertrude Moulton off the steamer
Argyll in Cypress Bend."

Harold felt himself growing weak and
faintish, and clutching the little man's arm,
he said:

"Who told you this—this lie?"

"Oh, now, my friend, don't go on that
dodge, because it is an old one, and won't
pay, in this instance," replied the small
man, looking calmly up into the colorless
face before him. "You see, to be frank
with you, I'm an attorney, Byron Skittles,
of No. 32 Natchez alley; and I have a cer-
tain client, by name Margaret Moulton, who
has the liveliest disposition in the world to
of your life in State prison; or treat you

were four sets, and among them the oblong, elliptical hoof-mark of a mule. Whoever rode these animals must have gone across the main trail before the Indians passed back; since on this the shod tracks were obliterated by the thicker trampling of the naked hoofs.

What could it mean? Had a party of white men passed the place, going in a transverse course to that pursued by the savages? And who could have been riding a mule? Hawkins could tell that this had been under a saddle, and not a pack.

The scouts rode along the side trace, first to see whence the shod horses had come, and whether they were not of the band of savage burglars.

They had not far to go before getting satisfied on this head. A camp-fire still smoldering; fragments of food around it, where men had eaten supper; among them some chips of biscuit, with which the red ants were already making free, transporting them to their subterranean cells.

Indians do not eat biscuit, because they have it not. The faces of the men who bivouacked by that smoldering fire must have shown white while it was blazing.

There were other signs, though not so distinctive of race. The long grass pressed down, where men had lain in a sleep. Near by the branches of the trees with the bark chafed, where ropes had been knotted around them. Underneath, the ground scented by the stamping of horses.

The trackers proceeded some way beyond the camp. They found that four horses and a mule had entered it; that they had come up the river by the same route as that, a few days before, traveled by Colonel Armstrong and his colonists; that they had not gone quite as far up as the crossing-place, but, before reaching it, had turned short off toward the bank, and passed the night in the camp recently deserted.

Here, again, the scouts could distinguish the tracks of four horses, all shod, all American, with those of a mule, also American—the hybrid of the States leaving a hoof-print easily distinguishable from that of its Mexican congener.

In addition, they saw the tracks of a dog—a large dog—evidently in companionship with the party of horsemen.

Satisfied that these must have come up the river bottom, and were in no way connected with the Indians, Hawkins and his party returned to the ford road; and, crossing this, entered the trace on its opposite side.

It brought them under the great oak, and in sight of "sign" which caused them to pull up, dismount, and give it keen scrutiny.

They had not been long so engaged when one who had entered the palmetto-bushes uttered an exclamation that attracted the rest toward him. It was accompanied by the words:

"Boys! here's the dead body o' an Indian!"

They all rushed to the spot, and bent over the form of what they supposed to be a savage. They could see he was dead, and what had caused his death.

A wound in the breast, from which the blood had but ceased flowing—a gash between two of his ribs over the region of the heart.

One stooped down and ripped open the buck-skin shirt saturated with gore. He started back with surprise, as did the others, on seeing the skin underneath. It was not red; it was not that of an Indian! The man who lay dead among the palmettoes—to all appearance murdered—was white! Yet in savage garb, with a horsehair wig upon his head stuck full of feathers; his face and hands besmeared with red paint, but the rest of his body of that color boasted by the race calling itself Caucasian.

Mystery of mysteries! What could it mean?

While they were endeavoring to solve the enigma, another cry claimed their attention.

A second searcher had found something else under the far-spread branches of the live oak. He had picked up two things, of themselves simple enough, but in that spot significant. One was an orange-blossom, the other a sprig of yucca. The first was crushed, as if it had received rough handling; the second might have had the same without showing it.

There was no yucca seen growing near, and certainly no orange-tree. They could think of only one place where the flower could have been plucked—the old Mission garden.

Who plucked it? Who had brought it thither?

Now it was remembered that the last place where Colonel Armstrong's daughters had been seen was in the Mission garden, or going toward it. Who but they had gathered orange-blossoms? And who but they could have brought them thither?

But how came they under the oak? The tracks showed that the Indians, after crossing the river, had come straight on toward the bluffs on the other side of the valley. Who were these that had turned up-stream? What was he lying dead among the palmettoes? Why had he been killed? Who gave him that terrible stab, that must have instantly put an end to his existence?

The trackers were in a quandary—awed as well as mystified! No wonder, with such traces around them, sanguinary as strange!

For a time they stood unresolved, not knowing how to act.

Hawkins put an end to their hesitation, saying:

"You, Cris Tucker, go back 'cross the ford, and straight up to the Mission. Ride fast as your horse can take you. Tell Colonel Armstrong what we've done, and what we've seen. Tell him about the trail o' shod horses, that appear to have gone up the river this side. Say, we've taken after, and sit going to follow them far as their trail leads. There's only five of them, so we needn't be afraid. Tell the colonel not to despair, but get all the boys ready and keep by the building till we come. An' Cris, just to comfort the old gentleman, tell him that maybe we'll bring back the dear girls along w' us."

"I'll do all ye say," was the simple response of the young hunter.

At which the two parted—Tucker riding back, and soon after plunging across the ford; while Hawkins, at the head of the scouting party, continued on up-stream on the trail of the shod horses.

CHAPTER LXXX. RESTORED.

THOUGH riding in all haste, it was near mid-day when Cris Tucker came in sight of the Mission building, bearing the report

sent by the scouts. The time consumed by them in scrutinizing the cross-trails had thus delayed him.

The colonists, who anxiously awaited their return, describing a single horseman afar off, were thrown into a fresh state of excitement and alarm.

It did not tranquilize them to identify the horseman as Cris Tucker; which they did long before he was within speaking-distance. He was alone, spurring his horse as if pursued!

Where were the others? Had the scouting-party fallen into an ambush, and been cut off? Were they all killed, except him who looked as if he were the last left of them?

The colonists crowded around Colonel Armstrong, and watched the scout as he came on. Silently—for no one ventured to offer an explanation of Tucker being alone. They trembled, too, at the thought that Indians might be close behind—a countless host of dusky savages, enough of them to lap round the little settlement and instantly annihilate it! They and theirs might be swept off, consumed as dry grass in a prairie conflagration!

Colonel Armstrong could not help sharing their apprehensions, though they moved him no more. His daughters gone, he had been giving way to despair. And now, he who was to have been his son-in-law—the generous youth long since seeming a son—he, too, a victim to the hostility of the red-handed savage. Despairing before, the shock of this further bereavement rendered him speechless.

With pulses quick beating, the colonists clustered around him, awaiting Tucker's approach.

As soon as the latter was near, each in his own way called out for the news, all speaking in like eagerness.

A load was lifted from their hearts when the scout said, in response:

"No bad news, boys! Rayther good than 'otherways."

A simultaneous shout of relief hailed the announcement; and in calmer mood they listened for further explanation.

Tucker, dismounting, and coming face to face with Colonel Armstrong, gave a detailed account of what the scouting-party had seen and done; not forgetting to add the hopeful words with which Hawkins had intrusted him.

The scout's report was like a sudden sunburst through skies long darkened. Faces became brightened around him; even that of the old soldier showing a faint ray of cheerfulness.

Then arose the inquiry, what they were to do.

It was answered by Tucker imparting the advice of which he was the bearer.

Coming from Hawkins, their guide and hunter, in whom they had confidence, and endorsed by Dupre, by most looked up to as the real leader of the colony, it was sufficient to decide them.

Although ready for the route, armed and equipped—horses caparisoned, haversacks provisioned for a half-week's campaign—all chafing with impatience to set forth in pursuit of the savages, they made a final effort to curb it, and await the return of the trackers.

To Colonel Armstrong it was an irksome interregnum; during which he was a prey to dark apprehensions and horrid imaginings, the more unendurable because unrelieved by the excitement of action.

It needed more than mere patience; reliance on God, in the full strength of Christian resignation.

God gave him his reward. Just as the sun was setting over the valley of the San Saba, the departing rays of roseate hue, kissing the cupola of the old Mission church, a mounted party could be descried coming from the direction of the river. In its midst appeared two figures, by their floating drapery recognizable as feminine, even in the far distance. And when nearer, it could be seen they were not Indian squaws, nor yet women of the common class. No coarse woollen gowns of homespun copperas stripes concealed their forms.

Instead, skirts of costly fabric, the produce of foreign looms, draped down to their ankles, as they sat sideways in saddles intended for a different style of equitation. Long before they had reached the Mission building a crowd was around, escorting them on their way; and when they at length drew bridle by the walls, arms eagerly outstretched received them from their saddles.

In front of the San Saba Mission-house was repeated that it had once before witnessed: Colonel Armstrong standing between his two splendid daughters, as on the eve of abandoning the old home; their arms again enfolding his neck, their eyes gazing upon his face with a filial affection, that had evidently lost none of its strength in the new one.

The spectacle only differed in now having witnesses—two who seemed especially interested. These were Dupre and the young surgeon, Wharton; the former giving ardent love glances to Jessie, that were so ardently returned; while the congratulations of the latter, bestowed upon her sister, were met by a melancholy smile and absent air, that might have told him there was no hope.

CHAPTER LXXXI. STILL ANXIOUS.

The joy of Colonel Armstrong, on having his lost children restored, and Dupre at recovering his fiancée, was shadowed by what had befallen the household servants. The fate of the stricken victims—slaves though they were—caused true sorrow to their masters, both kind-hearted men.

Nor had their money-worth any thing to do with it. Even the large amount of cash carried off by the robbers did not give its owner the slightest concern. Not then, as he stood by his affianced bride, who, her cheeks flushed by excitement, looked more beautiful than ever. With her by his side, and love in his heart, there was still room in it for pity, but none for sorrowful regrets.

Little cared the generous Crisole for the loss of his fifty thousand dollars. It was not costing him a thought; and at that moment the walls of the old Mission might have rung with his merry laughter, as when its cowed occupants made carousal, but for the corpses still lying in its courtyard. But the grim spectacle of death, by horrid, wholesale assassination, checked all tendency to mirth. Contemplating that, there could be no loud givety, much less laughter.

Still was there a sober, subdued joy at the turn events had taken. For all now saw the precipice on which they had been standing, and how near they had been to going over it. They could not be other than satisfied that things were no worse.

There was one who did not share the satisfaction—could not. Amid the general congratulations, Helen Armstrong, retired from the rest, was yet suffering anxiety of the keenest kind. For long there had been a cloud upon her brow; there was one there still, though now from a different cause. It was no more the somber shadow of melancholy, tranquil in its sadness, but the excited look of nervous apprehension, manifesting itself by glances that wandered, cheeks that were pallid, and lips set in silence.

Clancy: she might never see him! What if he should be killed in keeping his stern vow? His filial affection, his loyalty, she could, and did, admire. But then to think that these might leave her desolate—throughout all her life!

True, she had confidence in his strength and skill; in all the qualities to insure success in the undertaking upon which he had set forth. She believed him capable of any thing. What woman does not about the man she loves? But she had forebodings; now more than ever—now that she had become acquainted with all the circumstances, and knew they were not red, but white men with whom Charles Clancy might have to deal. Woodley had told her about Borlase, and the affair of the whipping-post at Nacogdoches. She could see in this old enmity enough to seal Clancy's fate, should it be his misfortune to fall in with the pirate. She dreaded that more than his encountering Darke. Now home again, herself safe, her sister, too, she felt the keenest apprehension about the safety of her lover.

While giving way to them, a comforter came to her side—Simeon Woodley.

But the backwoodsman, trying to cheer her, was himself not without anxiety. He could not help knowing that Clancy was in danger, and now regretted having allowed him to pursue Darke alone. It was a self-reproach that stung Woodley several times since their separation under the oak.

It was now spurring him to haste; and this he had been urging on the party organized for the pursuit. But the circumstances had changed. The safe return of the captive girls had made different the motive, depriving it of half its strength. The colonists were less eager, though still determined to pursue. For there was the treasure to be recovered, as also castigation to be given to the robbers for their attempt to take it; with punishment for the murders they had committed. Any of these were motive enough for following them to the bitter end; and another word from Woodley fired the intended pursuers afresh.

Their impatience reached its climax when Colonel Armstrong, with head uncovered, his white hair blown up by the evening breeze, stood before them, and said: "Follow, citizens! We have to thank the Almighty that our dear ones have escaped a dread danger. I am speaking, not of my own daughters, but yours as well—your wives and your sisters. And, while thanking God for his goodness, let us remember there is a man, whom He has sent to deserve our gratitude. A brave young man, whom we all believed dead, murdered. He is still alive; let us hope he is. You know whom I mean. Simeon Woodley has told you of the danger he is now in. Rashly, of his own doing, some of you may say or think. But that's not the question now; nor would it be a just reflection. Our duty is to pursue this band of robbers; not for the money they've taken—no matter about that—but to protect this noble youth, or rescue him, if by ill luck he has fallen into their hands. Friends and fellow-citizens! come what will—cost what it may—at all risk we must save Charles Clancy!"

The enthusiastic shout uttered in response to the old soldier's speech told that the pursuit, whether successful or not, would be energetic and earnest.

Helen Armstrong, standing a little retired, looked proudly confident. Her confidence came from hearing that shout—her pride, in perceiving the popularity of him to whom she had given her heart. Happiness, too, in knowing that for its bestowal she need no longer fear the frown of her father.

The night was high on; but this did not deter the pursuers from setting out. There were ten miles to the river crossing, and nearly as many beyond, that would need no tracking. Twenty miles passed over would bring them to the gorge, known to Hawkins, but still better to Simeon Woodley. On the upper plain they would need all the skill of these experienced trackers.

Before parting, Woodley slipped up to Helen Armstrong, and in a whisper, said: "Don't ye be frettin', Miss Helen. Thar ain't much likelihood o' danger, arter all. Charles Clancy knows how to take care o' himself. An' he be alive any whar on the prairies o' Texas, trust Sime Woodley for findin' an' bringin' him safe back to the only gurl he cares for, an' that's yerself, Miss Helen. Ef ill-luck shed hev it that they've got holt o' him—waugh! I won't talk o' sech a thing. They hain't got him. They can't kill him. The man ain't yet born that's to g'te the death shot to Charley Clancy. Thar's only one ked do that, and that one air a woman; not by a gun bullet, but by a glance o' her eyes, that wud say she'd ceased to love him. I know she won't g'te that glance—niver!"

There was something like interrogation in the last words of the hunter; something of the same in his eye, as he looked half askant at her he was addressing. He had noticed the assiduity of the young surgeon. Was it this made him conclude his speech in such strange fashion?

If he had any shadow of doubt about her fealty to his friend and comrade, it must have passed away on receiving her rejoinder. It was but the echo of his own final word, softly but emphatically pronounced: "Nener!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 97.)

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The man whom he had, as he believed, assassinated years before, had risen mysteriously from the grave to thwart him. If he were a living man, a terrible mistake had been committed, and young Duclos, set on by the intended but escaped victim, was ready to avenge his father's death.

On all sides ruin threatened him; he must quit the country before his enemies had time to discover him. All that remained to him was to secure all the money he could wring from Marlitt's fears, and decamp with it.

With this design he had come to the hotel and obtained a private interview, urging his claims both by persuasion and menace.

"If what you say is true," Marlitt replied to his importunities, "I am in a no less evil case than yourself. If my wife's first husband is not dead, her marriage with me is null and void. The property goes to the Hospital."

"Or to the young heir, if they find the papers," was the sullen response.

"In either case, away from me," resumed Marlitt. "I am penniless, as well as yourself."

"But your life and liberty are not in danger. Your complicity in that ugly business can not be proven, and—"

"You mean the girl's abduction and bath in the river! I had a right to her custody, and you were my aid, that is all."

"You know I mean nothing of the kind; but the job you hired me and Morell to do by the sea-coast."

"You can not make it out murder if the man is living."

"But the other! There was one killed—the military man! He wore his cloak, and that led wrong. Curses on the darkness!"

"Very true, and his son is here to call you to account."

"By all that's hellish, you shall suffer with me!" exclaimed the ruffian, exasperated by the calm security of the superior villain. "If I am to be brought up for that piece of work, I shall expose your share in it."

"You will find it not so easy to prove that, my friend."

"There is Morell—"

"I never dealt with him; I left that to you. Your own word is all you can bring against me."

"And you mean to throw me off—now trouble has come?"

There was a dangerous gleam in the man's eye as he asked the question.

"I do not mean to be intimidated by your threats."

"Nor to give me the money?"

"You are unreasonable. How can I, situated as I am just now, command two thousand dollars—which you have the face to ask as an earnest of more?"

"You have money in that desk; you need not deny it! I am desperate, I am driven into a corner, and I must have money!"

"When you have earned it by serving me, you may; not before."

"What do you mean? I have served you all these years! Did you not send me to Australia for your own benefit?"

"You would not stay there; more's the pity."

How could I—when your remittances failed! You employed me here, on the promise of two thousand down, and the rest—"

"You failed to do what you undertook; you have no title to the reward. I do not see that you have the shadow of a claim upon me."

"Take care, Jasper Marlitt, how you drive me to the last extremity!" cried the ruffian, on whose rugged face the sweat was standing in large drops. "I have put my neck in jeopardy already, and another dirty job, more or less, does not signify."

His blood-shot eyes glared threateningly at the composed, aristocratic-looking young gentleman, whose strength he was estimating for the contemplated struggle.

"You will have to do your worst, fellow," was his scornful reply.

"You will not pay me, then?"

"Pay you for nothing! Certainly not."

With a spring like a tiger's, Hugh Rawd closed with his leader in crime. He was the more vigorous and powerful of the two, for his toughened muscles were like iron; and the wild glare in his ferocious eyes showed his deadly purpose.

But the other had collected calmness of a resolute spirit. He met the assault prepared for it, and soon showed his antagonist that in command of nervous power he was more than a match for heavy brute force.

The struggle was a brief one. Throwing Hugh off suddenly, after they had reached the end of the apartment where the rose-wed secretary stood, Marlitt caught one of the knobs with the other hand and gave it a twist, pulling it open. A secret drawer was revealed, in which lay a pair of pistols, superbly mounted.

Snatching one of these, Marlitt planted himself with his back to the drawer, and leveled the weapon at the other's head.

"I will. He shall fight with me; and, soldier as he is, I will put him beyond mischief."

"He may refuse to fight."

"He will not. If he should, I know what to do."

"By this time he has set the officers on your track, or mine."

"No—he has made no stir whatever."

"You are sure of that?" exclaimed the ruffian, drawing a deep breath of relief.

"Then there is time to turn about. But he will have claimed his wife—and barred your way to the money."

"He has not done that. He will never claim her, unless forced to do it."

"Ha!"

"He has a foolish notion of sparing her the shame and scandal of being found out with two husbands; and fancies the law would have a hold upon her. That will keep him quiet. He has been watching over her longer than we could have believed a man would keep himself concealed, while his wife was rolling in riches."

"Then you are safe!"

"No—for the woman—I distrust her altogether."

"She knows he is alive?"

"No—she does not. He will not visit her for fear of being recognized and thus compromising her. She has sent for him, that she may thank and reward him for saving her daughter's life; but he refuses to come."

"That is lucky—if she does not know."

"And she must never know!" added Mr. Marlitt, bringing his clenched hand down with force on the table. "This man must die."

"And you will manage it?"

"I will slay him in a fair duel! If he avoid me, I will manage to get up a quarrel, and a blow in hot blood will fetch about a different state of affairs. But you must stand by me, to make all safe in case of accident."

"And when do you mean to see him?"

"This evening. There is no time to lose."

"That is true. But, Marlitt, I can not be your second in such an outfit as this," looking down at his begrimed clothes torn in the recent scuffle. "It is a fact that can not be lost sight of, that I must have money."

The other mused a few minutes. "I can give you enough to provide you with a new coat—though I can ill spare it at present."

"Let me have it quickly, then."

"Dress yourself more like a gentleman, without loss of time, and meet me—not here—at your own shop. I will call for you."

"It is rented; I have no home. I was leaving the place."

"You can hang about there till I come. It will not be long. See, it is dusk already."

While speaking he had opened another secret drawer, and drawn out a small roll of gold.

"Take these, and begone this instant."

"Twenty pounds," muttered the accomplice. "A smallish slice of my due."

"You shall have more when all is done! Now, off with you, and mend your wardrobe. I will see you at the shop, and give my orders. You must not stay here."

Hugh followed his directions implicitly. Arrayed in a new suit of dark clothing, he awaited him at the rendezvous.

CHAPTER XXIX. THE RECOGNITION.

Mrs. CLERMONT insisted on going herself to the dwelling of Sanders the hackman, to restore the papers he had sent her, and to announce her determination to relinquish the whole property to its rightful owner, the heir of Edward Clermont.

"I can obtain pupils in music," she said; "and if we live in one of the suburbs, our expenses of living will not be great."

"I will be content, dear mamma, with whatever you choose," was Orfel's reply, with her arms round her mother. "And you shall not work without my help!"

"Orfel! Mother!" exclaimed the young man, with reproachful looks at both. "Are you not mine—my bride? and is she not our mother?"

proved how much riches are really worth!" said the lady, mournfully.

"But you have something more to lose, as you said—there will be humiliation in your relinquishment."

"Not to me! I did not mean that—"

"To you, if to any one."

"No—not to me, or my daughter, in the mere loss of a fortune! A blessed release, perhaps, from one who has persecuted us both. But I shall be condemned for the delay; and you stand high in the world's opinion, Mr. Duclos; you have nothing to blush for in the past; it would not be just to let you share our abasement. My daughter shall bring no reproach to her husband!"

"Again I ask, what reproach could be cast upon her or you, madam?"

"The world is not just. It is cruel to the fallen. We shall be loaded with undeserved aspersions; I have made up my mind to encounter them."

"And I have resolved—if aspersions come, to share them with you. I will not give up Oriel."

"Frank!" said the weeping girl, lifting her head from her mother's shoulder, and looking with her soft brown eyes into his, "let it be as mamma says—for some time, till all the scandal is over. Then, if you like, you can visit me."

"And leave you alone to bear the blow in its first force!—Oriel, for what do you take me? And you, madam—let me assure you I will not leave this room, till you have promised that you will not interfere between us!"

With gentle but resistless force, he drew the young girl from her mother's embrace, close to his own heart, folding her in his arms. Oriel could not utter a word.

"Now let her mother take her from me if she can—if she dares!" he said, firmly.

Madeleine swept the tears from her eyes.

"I can not—dare not!" she exclaimed.

"May Heaven bless you, my children!"

The silence of deep emotion was unbroken for some minutes.

"Now you will call me Frank again, mother!" said the young man, smiling.

"I shall be your son in reality, before this is publicly known. That is decided. What do you now propose to do?"

"To return these papers," answered Madeleine. "But first, Oriel, come to my dressing-room. We must change our dresses."

"These are not fit for walking in."

"Why not go in the carriage?" suggested Frank. "Though the distance is not great."

"I shall never set foot in the carriage again. It does not belong to me. Come, my child."

Taking Oriel by the hand, she led her up the stairs.

In a few moments each of them had put on a plain dark walking-dress. That of the mother was a fine brown cassimere, gored and full at the bottom of the skirt, with only a narrow flounce for trimming.

The sleeves were tight fitting, and cuffs of snowy linen finished them at the wrists, with a collar to match at the throat. A watch-chain of jet and gold, and brooch to correspond, were the only ornaments.

Oriel's dress was a dark green silk, thick and soft in texture, and also fitting closely her slender and exquisite form. Her collar and cuffs were small and of the finest French work on linen. Her hair was put back from her forehead, the curls confined behind by a green ribbon.

Thus equipped, the two ladies joined Frank in the drawing-room. Under a small riding-hat with black net veil thrown back, her golden-amber hair rippling from her temples, and escaping in a stray ringlet here and there, Madeleine's face, flushed with the energy of her purpose, might have been taken for that of a young girl rather than that of a matron approaching middle age.

She was still, however, on the sunny side of that, and her beauty in its maturity exceeded the budding loveliness of her youth. Her form, luxuriant in its proportions, and of commanding majesty, was absolutely faultless. Her clear blue eyes and transparent complexion made her look like Oriel's sister rather than her mother.

Little was said by either of the party till they reached the house of Sanders.

He was within, seated at one side of the fire, in an arm-chair, leaning his forehead on his hand, apparently in deep thought.

His dress was the same as that of the day before, but his face was not so pale as it had been in the habit of wearing when not occupied in the stable. The other hung against the wall in one corner, ready for use, with his overcoat and cap.

At the end of the room George Miles was tuning his organ, the monkey capering about, and perching, in the intervals of his sport, on his master's shoulder.

The light tap on the door aroused the elder man. He called out, "Come in!"

Frank and Madeleine entered first, holding the door open for the two ladies.

Sanders rose to receive his guests, and there was much grace in his movement and attitude as he did so.

The elder lady wore her veil down. Oriel had none. Her host welcomed her with a smile, and a beam of pleasure.

"You are very good, my child," he said, "to remember the old man; to come and see him. Mr. Duclos promised me this pleasure—this evening; but I scarcely expected you."

A sudden shriek interrupted him.

Madeleine had flung back her veil, and stood with wide, wild eyes gazing at the man, whose voice she had recognized. Rigid and fixed was that stony gaze; deathly white was the face, to the lips partly in amaze and affright; but she did not swoon. It seemed as if the mandate of the soul, requiring the service of every faculty to take in the strange conviction, had overcome the weakness of the shrinking frame.

The long-separated husband and wife were again face to face!

The man gazed upon her too; but with conflicting emotions. Her more than girlish beauty flooded his spirit with a sort of rapture; her instant recognition told him he was not forgotten. But mingled with this delight was his stern resolution to deny himself her sight forever; to remove himself as a stumbling-block from her path.

Why had she come to make it so hard for him to keep this determination?

Oriel and her lover saw her change of countenance, and thought her suddenly taken ill. The girl ran to her with a cry of alarm, and Frank offered to support her. She thrust them both aside hastily.

"Lewis! Lewis!" at length she was able to articulate. She rushed toward the extended arms of her early love; she would have thrown herself on his breast. But, seized by an unspeakable consciousness, she stopped short, grasped his outstretched

hands, and holding them firmly in hers, sunk on the floor at his feet.

Lewis Dorant raised her; he clasped her closely in his arms.

"My wife! my own Madeleine!" he murmured, fondly. "You still love me, Madeleine?"

The bewildered woman disengaged herself from his embrace, still grasping his arms convulsively and gazing into his face.

"You did not die, Lewis!" she said, in a trembling whisper.

"No, my beloved Madeleine; it was a mistake. I have been an exile—and all because I loved you."

"Oh, Lewis! you abandoned me to despair—to the life of horror I have led since!"

"If I were to blame you must forgive me, Madeleine. We were both—Duclos and I—attacked by murderers; he was their victim, though they meant to make away with me. One of them saved me in a boat; took me to France, and tended me through an illness of many weeks. When my strength returned, I was weak of head, and I was easily persuaded not to show myself. I was told you had become the heiress of immense wealth, which you would forfeit if married to me; that you had already taken possession of this fortune and had assumed your uncle's name, to give wealth and comfort to our child."

Oriel and the young man had witnessed this strange scene, looking inquiringly at each other in search of its meaning. It was only at this point that she comprehended it.

"Then you are my father—my own father!" she exclaimed, bounding forward to greet her preserver.

"Embrace our child, Lewis!" said her mother, in a choking voice.

The girl was clasped in her father's arms.

Young Duclos did not dare intrude on the affecting scene. He retired to a greater distance, still looking at the persons in whom he was so much interested.

George Miles crept softly up to him, leading the monkey by his string.

"I say, sir," he whispered; "I'll just step outside with the animal; it's a family matter, and don't want strangers here. If you should want us by-and-by, you've only to come to the door, and tip us the wink, and we'll be in in a twinkling!"

He moved on stealthily; presently returning to add:

"I've got a thunderin' thick stick, with such a knob! in case of accidents; people outside—you know; ladies in the case. It's allers best to be prepared, you know."

This time he and the monkey made their exit without disturbance.

Lewis Dorant proceeded with his history.

"I came in disguise, Madeleine, to hear of you," he resumed. "I stood by my father's grave, and that they had supposed to be my own. I dared not let any one know I was living; for I had resolved not to drag you back to poverty; it was not for me to place a barrier between you and happiness."

"Happiness!" echoed the wife, bitterly.

"Affluence and ease, at least; the condition to which you were born; what had I to offer in their stead? Poorer than ever, my enfeebled health denied me even the power to labor! I could not offer you a shelter!"

"I fled from the country, to avoid the temptation of disturbing you! After months had passed, I came again. It was just after your marriage—and the former recognition of you as the mistress of Broadhurst."

"Lewis!" said Madeleine, reproachfully, "how cruelly you wronged me!"

"I knew the compact you had made with that bad man," he answered. "I knew the ceremony that passed between you was understood by both to be a mere form, enabling you to hold your inheritance; that your lives were separate, that you scorned the man, and had paid him with a share in your wealth, for which alone he had sought you. I saw you once, my wife—"

"You saw me?"

"But for a moment; you were dressed in mourning, and you looked sad; but you were happy in the growing beauty of your daughter. I saw her, too. I took her in my arms, one day when I met her walking out, and oh, how fervently I prayed Heaven to bless her."

Oriel had told her mother of the strange man who had kissed her.

"That I resolved should be my last glimpse of her and you."

"I tore myself away. I went abroad and enlisted as a soldier. Ten years I was in service; ten years, in all which time I heard nothing of my child."

"After a severe wound—which was long in healing—I quitted the army. I could not stay abroad; I returned to England, resolved to live here in the humblest capacity, where I could watch over those dear to me. I followed you wherever you went, Madeleine. Your movements were not far from me."

When you came to London, I established myself here, as a hackman, because, from the stand within sight of your house, I could see you when you came in and out."

Madeleine, who had sunk on a seat, was sobbing during all this narration. Her daughter, with clasped hands, had her eyes fixed on her father's face.

"Need I say more? Was it not Providence that preserved me from the dangers of battle—that I might save our daughter, when murderers would have killed her?"

Both his listeners looked up, inquiringly.

"These were no robbers who seized Oriel and threw her into the river. The villain Marritt and his accomplice—the very man who had attempted my life!"

"I knew it was so!" gasped the mother.

"I saw them before they put on their masks; I followed them, sure they meant something horrible. I saw them drag her on the bridges—"

"Merciful Heavens! for what?"

"Can you not guess? Marritt had the property after her death."

"Yes—yes—I had consented to that. How imprudent! I should have foreseen!"

"You were a child in his hands."

"But now," cried Madeleine, "the danger is over. He can not persecute us for the money. Here are the papers you sent me, Lewis—here, in this pocket-book! Take them to the heir—to the owner! We have given up the property!"

"I knew you could not be otherwise than just."

Here Duclos came forward.

"And I, Mr. Dorant, am the affianced husband of your daughter. I have not wealth to offer them, but a sufficiency for comfort—for her and her mother. We can make one family."

Dorant grasped his hand warmly. "To no man on earth," he said, "would I so willingly give my child. Heaven give you happiness! For her mother—she will be satisfied with what my daily labor can furnish."

"Welcome penury!" cried the wife; "re-united to you, Lewis—"

"Another fear disturbs me," he said. "I am not learned in the law; but the position in which my wife stands is one of danger. That bad man may take advantage of it—in revenge for losing the fortune."

"He can do nothing!" replied Frank.

"You mean Marritt? The ceremony of marriage with him was of course null and void, while you were living."

"But he may proceed against her, nevertheless."

"How could he?"

"You know not his resources of wickedness! All this plot was contrived by him. He influenced Mr. Clermont to make a will by which he might profit to place himself in possession of all! He planned my death, that he might marry the heiress, and through her maternal love, won her consent to the scheme. It was only by an accident that your father became the victim instead of me!"

"My father!" exclaimed the young man.

"What do you know of his death?"

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Dorant. "You, too, have a duty—and the saddest of all—laid upon you, to avenge bloodshed! It was by no accident your father died that night on the coast! I had undertaken to guide him to the railway, that he might proceed to the seaport town; and he insisted on going that night. We were waylaid and attacked by assassins. While I descended to the cave for a cordial to revive your father, one of the villains fell upon him, stabbed him, and threw him off the bridge, which was afterward broken, to make it appear that he had fallen down. It was his body that was found and buried."

"And this Marritt was the murderer?"

"Not in person; he had employed two men, one of whom, believing me to be your father, brought me off in a boat. The other would have slain me for fear of discovery."

"Who was this man?" asked young Duclos, grasping Dorant's arm in his eagerness.

"Hugh Rawd was the murderer's name."

"And where on earth can I find the miscreant?"

"He is here, in London; in the employ of Marritt. It will be easy to trace him. It was from him I tore the pocket-book containing those papers. In his fright at seeing the man he supposed he had killed, he took me for a specter, and offered little resistance."

"Both—both—shall pay the penalty!" cried the young man, in an agony of emotion.

"Do not take vengeance into your own hands, my boy. The actual assassin can be made to expiate his crime; to answer for it in a court of justice. I can testify to it—"

"And Marritt, who he hired to help him, will give his testimony. But the deeper villain, I fear, is beyond our reach. We can not prove his complicity; Marritt did not receive his orders from him."

"I will wring confession from the murderer then!" cried Frank.

"You may do that; for he is a coward; and he may furnish better evidence than his own word."

"I will go at once to the police office, to order his arrest. Can you tell me where he may be found?"

"He has been living in Chancery Lane, in the disguise of a Jew."

"Stay, my son!" said Madeleine. "We must go back to the house for to-night. Let us all go together, Lewis. Give me your arm, and let Frank take our daughter. There we will consider what is first to be done."

She was interrupted by a noise outside the door. Voices were heard, and signs of a scuffle. Persons were evidently trying to force an entrance.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 305.)

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 305.)

Recollections of the West.

In a Rattlesnake Den.

BY CAPT. BRUIN ADAMS.

THERE is something so absolutely hideous, and, at the same time, appalling, in the appearance of a full-sized rattlesnake, in coil and ready to strike, that I have seen the bravest and coolest men start back at the sight of one, and tremble, while their cheeks blanched deadly white, as nothing else, perhaps, on earth could have caused them to do.

And those who best know the snake, its power and marvelous quickness in attack, are the ones who most dread, and frequently shy at it. If, then, a single reptile of this species can so strike terror into the bravest heart, and that, too, when there is every facility for escape, what must be the effect upon him who is confined in close quarters with hundreds of the disgusting creatures threatening from every side?

I was once witness to such an event, and, though it has now been many years since it occurred, yet I can not recall the circumstance without a shudder of horror, or with out a wish that I could blot it entirely from my memory. I was living at the time on my ranch, located near the foot of the Phantom hills up between the Cincho and Colorado.

Some weeks previous I had been down to San Antonio, and having made the acquaintance of several young gentlemen who had come out from the "States" in search of adventure, hunting, etc., I invited them up to spend as long a time as they might think proper, assuring them that they would find there an abundance of game of all sizes and kinds.

Late one afternoon they dashed up to the door, and dismounting at once on my requesting them to do so, took possession of the place and made themselves at home.

My contract with the young fellows was, that they were to do just as they pleased; using the horses, dogs, guns, negroes as guides; but they were to allow me the same privilege, and perfect freedom to attend to business, as it was the season for that.

There was, however, one restriction placed upon their movements, a useless one, as it turned out, for, as a matter of course, the forbidden fruit was almost the first that they "went for."

In a narrow, rugged valley upon the mountain side, was a singularly-formed cave, surrounded upon all sides by great boulders and crags, the whole forming one of the wildest-looking places that I have ever seen.

The cavern did not, as is usually the case, run back into the bowels of the earth, but penetrated straight down to the depth of ten or fifteen feet, and then branched off in two, if not three, different directions.

Now, this place was known far and wide as the "rattlesnake den," and it certainly deserved the title.

On any sunny day, and especially after a shower when the clouds had blown away, the rocks and level spots in the immediate vicinity of the cavern were literally covered with rattlesnakes of all sizes, ages, and shades of color peculiar to the tribe. There they lay and basked in the warm rays, quiet when undisturbed, but upon the slightest noise every head and tail would be erected, and then such a storm of hisses, and such a rattling of rattles would take place as would make the valley resonant with the terrible sound.

Whether it was because of the presence of the reptiles that no game was ever to be found in this little valley, I know not; but such was the fact, let the reason be what it may.

Into this valley, then, I forbade my guests penetrating. I took them over one morning for an inspection, made from a respectable distance, and from their varied expressions of horror and disgust, I concluded that they had had enough of Snake Valley.

I expect that no set of young fellows out for fun ever so enjoyed themselves as did my guests for the first week or two. One of them especially—a Kentuckian, by the name of Wynne—seemed to enter into the sport with an ardor that never flagged.

On two separate occasions the subject of the Snake Valley was introduced, and I saw that the desire to visit and inspect the cavern more closely was gaining ground.

Wynne, in particular, was pressing—declaring that, with proper caution, there could be no danger, and he was seconded by the rest.

I saw how it would end; but, thinking that they had been sufficiently impressed to make them careful in case they went, I allowed the subject to pass from my mind.

It was the third or fourth day after this, a dark, gloomy one, such as nearly always precedes a violent storm or Norther in those parts, and I was sitting on the porch in front of the ranch, watching out across the prairie for some signs of my guests, who usually returned before this late hour.

While thus engaged, I discovered off toward the mountains a horseman rapidly approaching, who, from the way he plied both whip and spur, was evidently anxious to reach somewhere as soon as possible. I know not why it was, but the instant I saw the man riding so desperately, Snake Valley flashed into my mind, and as he drew near enough for me to see that it was one of my guests, his face blanched to an ashy white, and convulsed with an awful terror, I knew that some fearful tragedy had been enacted in that lonely locality.

"Wynne! Wynne!" gasped the young man, as he reeled out of the saddle.

"What is it, man? Speak!" I exclaimed, catching his arm and shaking him fiercely.

"Go, for God's sake! Wynne has fallen into the Snake Cavern!" and the poor fellow almost fell into a chair that he had managed to reach.

The news was simply awful. I knew the conformation of that cave too well to even hope that the unhappy man could escape by climbing.

The walls sloped outward as they descended, the bottom being at least four times as large around as the entrance; besides which, they were as smooth as the walls of a room. For a moment I was completely stunned. I had never dreamed of anything so fearful as this. I had thought they, inexperienced in such matters, or some one of them, might be bitten, if they ventured into the valley; but as to falling into the den itself, while I knew a hundred, perhaps hundreds, of the enraged reptiles would attack at once, the thought was too hideous to entertain even for an instant.

As these thoughts flashed through my mind, I was rapidly assisting one of my boys to saddle a fleet mustang; which being done, and having snatched up my lariat and an old cavalry saber as the best weapons against the snakes, I mounted, and was off, like a shot, for the scene of horror.

At the entrance of the valley I found the rest of the party assembled, their faces only too plainly corroborating the intelligence Grey had brought.

"He has ceased calling," said one, in a husky, choking voice.

"How long since he fell in?" I asked, as I coiled the lasso round my arm and unsheathed the saber.

"More than half an hour. We tried to—"

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

BY JOE ZOT, JR.

No life is in the palace walls,
Not even a fount is leaping.
A hundred years, oh, blessed nap,
The inmates have been sleeping!

The mystic spell upon them fell
Without a premonition;
They stand as stricken stone
Each in the old position.

And they have slept a hundred years,
A snore I do begrudge them,
And none has rapped upon the door
To early breakfast budge them.

No feet have passed the outer gate,
No hand has touched the latch;
They'll sleep until the fated prince
Shall come and loose their fetters.

The "boots" was caught just in the act
Of thieving from the pantry;
The errand boy stands on his head
Just in the eastern entry.

The milkmaid and the groom have stood,
In spite of time and weather,
A hundred years in one long kiss,
Their lips fast sealed together!

(Oh, luscious kiss on lips so fair,
Of bliss it should be thrice as rare,
A hundred years! I'd be content
To take a kiss of fifty!)

The housemaid stands, with, in her hands,
A broom, new as she bought it;
The porter feels the fated prince
Looks as if he'd just caught it!

The king sits with his pen in hand
As if dispatch inditing,
But never for a hundred years
A word has he been writing.

The ladies in the drawing-room
Sit as if frozen rigid—
Some of their smiles are very sweet,
Some of their frowns are frigid.

One hides her scorn behind her fan,
Of sweetly smelling sandal;
And one tells in another's ear
Some bits of courtly scandal.

At one end there's a row between
Two ladies clad in laces,
Their hands have grasped each other's hair,
And scratched each other's faces!

Two servants in the cellar are
Among the royal bottles,
And emptying the king's best wine
Down their unwhirl throattles.

A supe has called the guard a liar,
And, as he starts to run or
To jump, the guard catches on him
A kick that is a stunner.

Oh, what a kick! a hundred years!
I am exceedingly zealous
To give such an endangering boon
To some more modern fellows.

The cook has dropped the king's best dish
As if she screamed "My ears oh!"
She stands a picture of despair—
Has stood a hundred years so.

The dinner on the table sits:
The guests are long in coming,
A waiter holds the glass in hand, like a
As in the act of drumming.

A waiter quick to steal a pinch,
Has reached one of his hands there;
The mystic spell upon him fell,
And in the act he stands there.

Upstairs a gaily young man blows
A flute in which no tunes are;
And there below a sneak-thief is,
And in his hands the spoons are.

But, see the princess slumbering there,
Upon her couch so quiet,
And o'er the downy pillow, see,
Her bounteous tresses riot!

Her smile, how it becomes her face!
(Sure nothing could be soper,
She holds a novel with both hands,
Ope'd at the twentieth chapter.

Yet, here she's slept a hundred years;
Her clothes are out of fashion;
To find this when the prince shall come,
Will put her in a passion.

He comes, a prince from Italy,
Tired, hungry as a Gorgon;
He leaves beside the palace gate
His monkey and hand-organ.

He peeps in at the princess' door,
(As yet no word is spoken),
She smells him—and she gives a scream,
And all the charm is broken!

She flies straight at him in a rage
For breaking her sound slumber,
And bootjacks, chairs, immediately
His uncombed head number.

The king begins to stretch himself,
"It must be daylight barely,
It seems to me they've waked me up
To breakfast rather early."

The minister starts and rubs his eyes;
His brain begins its scheming;
"My mind," he says, "is somewhat dim,
It seems I have been dreaming."

And everybody shakes themselves,
Though each one feels nesty;
"We've waited dinner, quite a while,
The servant says it's ready."

And when they'd dined the prince was wed
Unto the Sleeping Beauty,
And she went with him through the world
Along the path of duty.

I met them only yesterday,
They stopped beneath my window,
They looked as if they wanted soap,
And brown as any Hindoo.

She played upon the tambourine,
He turned the crank with labor;
I gave them fifteen cents for tea,
Then they went for my neighbor.

Mohammed, the Outlaw.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

MOHAMMED BEN OUMBARK listened attentively; the tiger pricked its ears and stopped purring; and the elephant uttered a snort.

"You see," said Fish, calmly, "I was right. They are getting impatient at my absence, and wondering I do not return, to tell them I have found you. Now, can you trust me to save you?"

"Tell me your plan," said the outlaw, "and I will answer."

"Mohammed ben Oumbark," said the Yankee, solemnly, "I know your history and sufferings. You are the rightful heir to the throne of Oude, but supplanted by the cowardly Nussir-u-deen. Many of the people still love you. I am a poor adventurer, who has wandered hither to make my fortune. In Nussir-u-deen I have found a cruel but lavish master; to find you, and slay you. But you have saved my life. In return I will give you a throne."

"You promise high for a soldier of fortune," said the banished prince, slowly.

"I know my men," said Fish, proudly. "We can do what we like in Oude. Make me your General, when you are Nawaub, and give me the reward I should get for your head, and I will bring you that of the usurper."

Mohammed hesitated.

"How can I trust you?" he said. "You propose a treason, on your own showing; and you may betray me, too."

"Is a choice of evils," said Fish, coolly. "I'm not rascal enough to betray the man who's saved my life, and I'm not fool enough to throw away the means of fortune for a sentiment. I am a soldier of fortune, you say. Well, I will turn my coat and

take your service instead of Nussir-u-deen's. That's all. Decide quickly. In a few minutes 'twill be too late. You can not be worse off. I give you a chance."

"I have decided," said Mohammed, slowly. "I will trust you. God forgive you, if you betray me."

"Then listen," said Fish, quickly. "Send away your tiger and elephant, and lie down at the foot of that tree, as if you were asleep. Don't stir, whatever you see. I will proceed."

He turned, and blew a long blast on a little bugle that hung on his side, waved his hand in adieu, and plunged into the jungle.

Half an hour's steady walking brought him to the edge of the wild, swampy undergrowth, and out into the open fields, where a glittering line of horsemen, foot-soldiers and several elephants were drawn up, awaiting him.

The instant the American commander appeared, a tall, slim youth, with a most villainous countenance, galloped up, on a splendid horse, and addressed him. This young man was evidently a Hindoo, but, from his dress, might have been an European sailor, with a touch of the stage pirate. He was attired in a loose jacket and trousers of white duck, with a crimson silk sash round his waist, in which was stuck a long dagger. On his head was a broad Panama hat.

"Well, Rajah Fichu," he said, impatiently, "what has kept you so long? What news?"

"Great news, my lord," said Fish, with a profound bow. "Your highness can avenge yourself in person. I have found the robber, the audacious pretender, and he lies asleep in the jungle, at the foot of a tree. If your highness will follow me, I will show you the wretch, and you can end his bold pretensions with one stroke."

Nussir-u-deen, for it was the usurper, smote his hands together in exultation.

"Now, by the beard of the Prophet!" he exclaimed, "Fichu Rajah, if this be true, I will make thee General over all my forces. Thou hast done more than all my soldiers together!"

"If your highness will follow me, you can see him," said Fish. "We will but take

ed. He was a coward at heart, and therefore he waited for the rest to come forward. He was a ferocious wretch, and therefore he desired to stab the sleeper with his own hand.

Fish and the doctor advanced before the rest of the Rajahs, and the former drew his revolver. He ascertained at a glance that the formidable companions of the outlawed prince were hidden away at some distance. Where, he could not tell. Mohammed ben Oumbark was apparently sound asleep, his back resting against a hillock, covered with luxuriant vegetation.

"Shall I shoot him, your highness?" asked the Yankee, coolly.

"By no means," said the Nawaub, angrily. "Stand behind me, pistol in hand, and kill the pretender only if I fail! Now, my lords all, follow me."

He drew the long dagger from his belt, threw off his broad hat, and advanced to stab the sleeper. With a soft, stealthy step he came close to Mohammed, and uplifted the long blade over his head. And still the outlawed prince slept.

And then it was that Fish deliberately raised his revolver, and just as the blade quivered for the final blow, the pistol cracked.

Without a groan, Nussir-u-deen dropped like a slaughtered ox, across the body of his intended victim, shot through the brain.

Mohammed started up, as the audacious Yankee waved the pistol in the air, shouting:

"Long live Mohammed Rajah, Nawaub of Oude! Death to all traitors and pretenders!"

There was no difficulty in accomplishing the desired revolution. Such ups and downs are common in Hindostan under native rule. To-day, an outlaw—to-morrow, a prince—is the lot of many a member of an Asiatic dynasty. Rajah Mohammed proved an exception to the general rule of his kind, in that he reigned a mild and virtuous prince for many years. He performed all his promises to our astute friend, Preserved Fish, Esq., and the latter left his service, some years after, worth a good many millions of rupees.



MOHAMMED, THE OUTLAW.

He became moral in his old age, endowed a Methodist church, and often tells his children how he made a fortune, by making a prince out of MOHAMMED, THE OUTLAW.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Pete's Buck-skin Patch.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

"Grr out! you're a purty feller to talk 'bout *o'ers*, you be. Much you know o' *them* critters," and Pete Shafer sniffed contemptuously at the last speaker, who chanced to allude to an adventure he had with Bruin in his native fastness.

"Talk 'bout *o'ers*—I know 'em—ef I didn't, then I wouldn't say so. Was raised right 'mong 'em, I was; leas'tways I would 'a' bin ef thar'd bin any whar we lived. But when we moved out to Iowa, then I was thar—bet ye I was. Bar—oh, g'way! Bars thar you couldn't rest. So thick thar, they was, that the grass couldn't grow. Little boys thar used to use 'em fer hosses; that is, they would ef they hedn't 'a' bin skinned to."

"Tell ye 'bout the first one that I hed a muss with—shall I? Then don't talk—keep still an' quit seroudin' thar—you, boy, set still; you kin hear a-plenty whar you be. Wal, then, here goes."

"You see, I member this time better'n most others, fer it was the first time 'at I ever drawed bead on a red-skin, though I was then a right smart chance o' a boy—big a plenty to lug the gals tell they squealed, anyhow, ef the old folks wasn't round too cluss. But the don't matter now, seefin' as I've outgrewed it all long since."

"As I said, we lived in Iowa, nigh the line 'vidin' it an' old Missouri, on a farm which we hed preempted sorter pernicious like. Thar was right smart woods 'round us, sorter open, 'th not much underbresh, an' good grazin' fer the stock, which they used thar consid'able. It was part o' my stent to drive 'em up every evenin', but on't I couldn't find one, a yearlin' steer thet 'blonged to me, 'vidually."

"So in the mornin' I sot out, to hunt it up. Dad was mighty strick 'th me 'bout shootin' irons, but I fooled him thet time, anyhow. 'Fore day I slipped out an old musket—the orfullest kicker 'at ever you did see!—an' a butcher knife, an' hid 'em. So I tuck them an' moseyed af 'ter the steer. I found him at last—sech es he was."

"Mebbe I didn't cuss—but I wouldn't 'vise you to bet on thet. Ef you did, you'd loose, shore. Thar was the steer—dead'n a tumblebug onder a waggin-wheel. Hed 'bin shot—I could see thet—an' shot 'th an arrow. It made me hot, it did; madder'n a ho'net with his tail out off, I was."

"Then I sot to lookin' fer sign. I hed purty far 'eyes, an' soon found the track o' a moccasin'd fud, Injun toed. I sot out on this trail, an' swore 'at I'd shoot the pesky varmint ef it killed me, an' I meant it, too, bet yer life I did, now!"

"Wal, sir, I follered thet trail fer good two miles, when I kem on the dratted imp, a-settin' on a log, fast asleep. He didn't hear me, an' so I up 'th the old musket an' let 'im hev it. Let me hev it, too, it did. Kicked me nigh onto twenty rods, more or less. Don't know whar I'd 'a' stopped, ef I hedn't run ker-suck into a tree, it kicked so hard. Talk 'bout kickin'—thet gun kicked harder'n a blind mule a-kickin' frozen pum'-kins up a side hill! Ef it didn't, then I wouldn't say so."

"I looked up an' saw the red-skin a-layin' thar, jest *more'n* bleedin', an' it skeered me, it did, by gracious! I felt all over in spots, then, an' got up to run away. I did run a little ways—but not fur. Then I stopped. Somethin' was thar that I didn't like the looks o', overly much. 'Feared like I'd better climb a tree."

"An' so I did, like a pesky greeny, an' a gre't big one, too. I shinned up it in a hurry, too, fer he was 'a' ter me. Talk 'bout bars—it was a bar, now you'd better believe. Big—oh, Lord! Bigger'n all out o' doors, purty nigh; looked like a mounting on wheels, it did! An' mouth—now you're talkin'—hed a mouth; 'twasn't no slouch nyther, I tell ye! Made me think o' dad's old red flannel shirt a-hangin' on a line, chuck full o' wind."

"Ye see, I was skeered—I don't mind sayin' so now—an' didn't stop to think. I tuck the first tree 'at I kem to, which was a big white oak. A little one he couldn't 'a' climbed, but this he was a-swannin' up lively, an' I hed to put in my best ticks. As I got nigh the top, I stopped. The bar was comin' up. I slid out on a small limb, an' the brute stopped just at the butt end o' it. Thar I was, an' thar he was, too."

"I was out cluss to the end, whar it bent like fun aneath me, an' wuss luck, I hed gone out *face fo' most*, and now couldn't turn round, fer fear o' fallin'. The varmint hed layed down 'long the limb, an' sorter retched on his paws, a-felin' fer me,

like. Mebbe I didn't feel sorter queer *back thar*, as I heard his toe-solers a-diggin' inter the bark, so cluss thet I sorter tickled!"

"Then hed snort, an' I felt his red-hot breath on the buck-skin patch thet mam hed sowed on my latter end, jest the day afore, to kiver a hole thet I'd wored out. It felt nice—I guess *not*—it did. Sorter warmed me up, like. Thought the patch was a shrivelin' up, it got so hot. I holered like fun, then. Couldn't help it. Must 'a' did it o' *but*st. But the pesky critter didn't like it, I reckon, fer hed snort like a house afire, an' kep' on scratchin'."

He was afeared to come out on thet limb, it was so small. Cracked on't in a while, even then."

"Seemed like I was a gone sucker, then, as I looked down an' see'd how fur I'd hed to fall, ef I did fall. It was 'thar thet or else thet pesky mouth. Six o' one, hafe a dozen o' 'other, I thought. Made me think all sorts o' preacher-talk, then, ef I never did afore. Most thought I'd got 'figion, but I guess 'twarn't, seefin' it's wored all off, now."

"Some pesky queer ideas kem inter my head as I swung thar, like some ripe apple, 'most ready to drop. Thoughts o' the old folks an' the little ones. Thoughts o' my gal, too—the one I fit Jabe Perkins fer, wondered ef she'd cry when she heard how I'd got rubbed out, an' ef she'd take up 'th Jabe agin."

"Then I thought, too, what mam'd say ef the bar shed grab hold o' thet patch she'd bin so keeful in puttin' on. 'Twouldn't be no use no more, ef he did."

"Lord! boys, I couldn't begin to tell you *hafs* thet I thought o' then. I often laugh over it, but I didn't feel like laughin' then; not much! I often shet my eyes an' think o' how we must 'a' looked thar. I a-layin' thar, my heels a-danglin', a-holdin' on fer dear life, an' sightin' the pesky varmint plum in the eye 'th thet patch, while he kep a-stretchin' out his paws, a-felin' fer me. Then hed scratch the bark, jest a little, from thet patch, an' how I'd scrootch up in a heap, jest like a toad does when you tetch his back. Bet thet he laughed at me, good. Jest *fun* fer him, ye know."

"Wal, it couldn't go on this way all day, an' I s'pose the varmint got tired o' playin' 'th me, fer he give a big stretch, an'—his *te-nails* retched in thet pesky patch! An' they cotched somethin' else, too; jest a leetle, though, on't through the skin. But I hedn't."

"I let out a squeal an' jumped to 'ard; the bar give a pull, an' thar I was, a-hangin' neck an' heels together, by thet patch; an' the bar jest a-snortin', tryin' to pull me up. But his toe-nails was fast. I was a good-sized chunk o' a boy, an' he was in a ticklish persish. He hed to hold on like fun to keep from fallin' over, an' the tree-trunk kep him from backin' down. Do his purtiest, he couldn't pull me up nor shake me off."

"Thar I kicked, jest a-squallin'—a painter had no aidge on me then! An' jest then I felt the patch begin to *tar out*! I knowed I must fall, an' I 'peared like I was dead a-ready."

"Then it give way, an' down I went like a bullfrog off'n a high bank. But I lodged on one o' the last limbs, fortunately fer me. I wasn't hurt much, an' rolled off to the ground, a-straddle o' the old musket."

"I was mad then; so mad thet I didn't stop to see ef I was killed or not, fer I felt thet thet buck-skin patch was gone, the bar hed tored it plum out! So I ups an' begins fodderin' the old shooter. I heard the varmint a-comin' down, jest a-snortin', but I didn't keer. He kem starn first—as you know they alays do—an' 'fore he tetch'd ground I ups an' let 'im hev it—'most a pound—right under the fo' paw. It kicked me over ag'in—the gun did—but I didn't keer. I'd killed the bar."

"The patch was still on his toe-nails, but it was 'tletely ruined—all tored full o' holes. I knowed I'd cotch it when I got home—an' I did, too. Mam liked me like fun 'th her slipper—to heal the scratches, mebbe."

"But I got the red's skelp, an' the bar's pelt, an' then mam put another patch on jest whar I'd lost t'other. So I didn't keer much," concluded Pete, with a grim smile.

Beat Time's Notes.

Is there is anybody for whom my heart continually bleeds it is for poor John Smith. I weep for him when I read how brutally he was murdered in New York, and then, before he has time to fully get well again, I am called to mourn his untimely death from a circular sent in Wisconsin; and then I am grieved to hear that he was left swinging on a limb in Arkansas, where he had been making the horse trade lively. I hardly get over that till I read of his arrest in Mobile for imitating another man's autograph; but I am glad that it turns out to be a hoax, for I learn that he is a preacher in a Vermont pulpit; then I am worried to death again to hear that my old friend has just been shot as a deserter in the army; when, lo! he turns up as a Sunday school superintendent in Ohio, and I am relieved until I learn he is in jail at Baltimore for stuffing the ballot-box, but I am made glad to know that he has got out of that, even though it is only to be crushed and mangled to death in an afternoon matinee on the railroad. My very soul is sore for him. I do earnestly believe he will come to some bad end yet, and I consider him to be the worst used man on the continent, and the poor victim whom Fate has selected to be toyed with or tossed on her horns until he certainly must be weary of life.

HERETOFORE steamboat boilers have been made so strong and thick that when, through the dispensation of Providence and the engineer, they blow up, they disfigure the looks of the boat very much, and take a good deal of the varnish off, not to say anything about disconnecting the passengers. The new boat Neverfall, Beat Time, Master, has a boiler made of tin sheet iron, which will not explode with such force as the others, although it will explode oftener, and does not require half the steam to do it with, which is a great saving.

Occasionally passengers may wake up with the loss of some of their baggage, an arm, a couple of legs, a body, or a head, or so; but, nothing worse. This is a tri-weekly steamer, that is, it will blow up three times a week with the utmost regularity and dispatch, but with less destruction of steamboat than with others. The boat you will find to be not such a great steam dying establishment as others are, and passengers are expected to have common sense enough to jump overboard before an explosion occurs, and save themselves a good deal of trouble.

This is a model boat, half in and half out of the water—that is, it is here the time in the air—and travelers not only have a trip on the water, but can enjoy the delights of aerial navigation, combining pleasure and profit—and loss.

THE way the difficulty between me and that chicken commenced was this: I was sitting on my front step and the chicken stopped in front of my gate, which was open, and stood there very ungentlemanly looking at me, and with something like a broad grin spread over his features. Said I:

"My young exile from Shanghai, I would be glad if you would move on," but it stood on one leg, and winked one eye at me with a familiarity that I despise in anybody. Then I said "Shoo!" thinking it might understand that language and go home without making a fuss, which it didn't do any such a thing, but deliberately walked in the gate, and took advantage of a bug which was walking on the paving. This is theft in the eyes of the law. Then, added to that, it wiggled its hind-leg in a derisive sort of a way, and gave a low chuckle. This was more than I will take from any thing that walks on two legs. I made a grab for that insolent chicken, and, with the intention of wringing his ear, I swung my neck in two, and he started around on two legs and two wings hunting for his head, and, finally, flopped into a pan of scalding water, and all the feathers came off him *easy*; then he fooled around until he got into the oven and was roasted. Thus that foolish chicken was sacrificed upon the altar of an enraged appetite. I saw my neighbor hunting around for something this morning, but I don't know whether he found any thing.

YOUNG man, when you go to see your girl of an evening, take your hat at nine o'clock, for a couple of hours is plenty long enough to sit and talk. A half an hour might be pleasantly passed in standing and talking with your hat in hand, but stand no longer than three-quarters of an hour at the door as you start; then, another half-hour on the first step, if the moon is shining well, but any thing more than an hour or so in addition, over the gate, is not good manners. Be careful that your good-by kisses don't wake the neighbors. Call again.

"ANXIOUS INQUIRY." We would advise you to read "Little Dickens," by Charles Dorrit; "Harriet Beecher's Cabin," by Uncle Tom Stowe; "Daniel Croose," by Robinson Defoe; "Enoch Tennyson," by Alfred Arden; "Lallah Moore," by Thomas Rookh, etc. For light reading, peruse the entertaining advertisements by the author of "Boy Lost," "Dog Found," "For Sale Cheap," etc.